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Number 73
July/August 1990

100 Games Rated!

Circuit's Edge • Chamber of the Sci-Fi Mutant Princess

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Definitive Computer Game Magazine



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New Games From CES

• *Kellyn Beck on* •

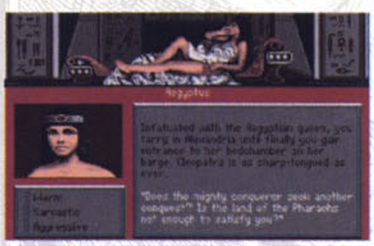
THE S·E·C·R·E·T·S OF CINEMATIC ADVENTURES

Let's go back in time. All the way back to about 275 BC. Civilization exists only in small pockets like Rome, Greece and Egypt. The rest of the world is a vast terra incognita, peopled with strange and dangerous barbarians. You are a young Centurion, sent with your legion to subdue marauding tribes of the Alps.

What would such an adventure be like?

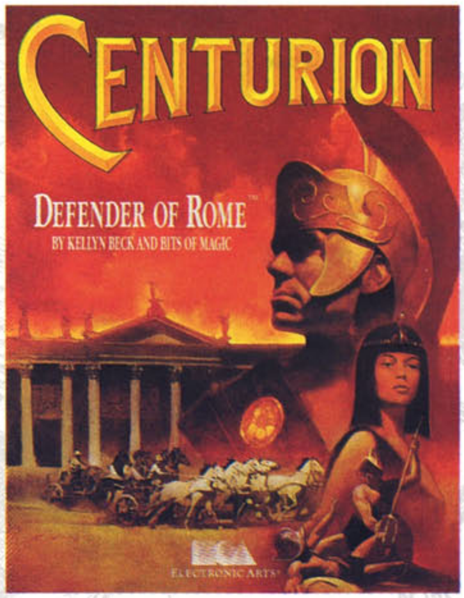


That's the premise of Centurion: Defender of Rome™, a new cinematic adventure, where you don't just watch the story unfold, you **control the action**. You'll race chariots in the Circus Maximus, sail fleets of ancient warships across the Mediterranean, compete in gladiator shows in the Colosseum, seduce the voluptuous Cleopatra and lead Roman legions into battle at the edge of civilization.

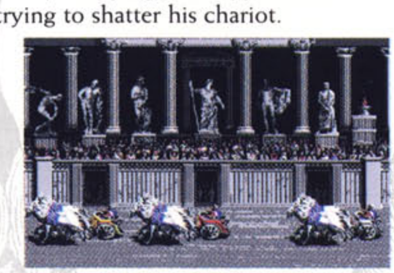


In Centurion, rich images of a time long ago are brought to life with cinematic techniques. I began exploring the uses of cinematic techniques in Defender of the Crown™ and Rocket Ranger™. But as great as these early cinematic adventures LOOKED, they lacked the addicting involvement and interactive levels of great computer games. The "cinematic" part was complete. The "adventure" part was in its infancy.

The cinematic adventure has finally grown up. We used every last one of our secrets in making Centurion. It's all there: great graphics, cinematic editing, strategy, and depth of gameplay that players now demand.

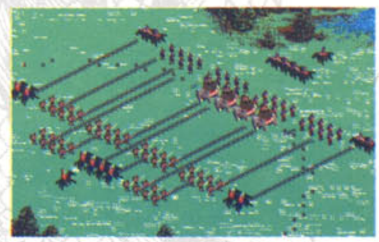


Take Centurion's chariot racing scene. We planned out every scene the way a filmmaker would shoot it. You see your chariot enter the Circus Maximus and pass in front of a packed grandstand. The "camera" cuts to an aerial shot of the track and zooms in for a close-up of your chariot. Suddenly the race begins. You hold the reins as you charge around the track, whipping your opponent and trying to shatter his chariot.



We even added a fully-orchestrated musical soundtrack. We asked award-winning film composer Jon Newton to work his magic with sound boards. The pounding drums and blaring trumpets bring out the drama of each event.

But we wanted to go beyond cinematic appeal. We wanted to create an environment that's different each time you play, one that doesn't have the usual pre-determined path. Like our land battle. You control the action and create your own winning strategies. You direct the movement of each infantry and cavalry unit. You send your general into the fray to bolster your troops' morale. Retreat. Charge ahead. Outflank. Even form a wedge. But your enemies are "smart" and unpredictable. They'll adapt to outwit your previously successful strategies and present you with new challenges each time you play.



Cinematic graphics and great game play. This is what makes Centurion the first complete cinematic adventure.



It took my group, Bits of Magic and Electronic Arts® three years to bring the epic world of Centurion to life. I sincerely hope you'll enjoy your journey back in time to the world of ancient Rome. (Here's one last secret: Save the Parthians for last. They can tear you to pieces.)

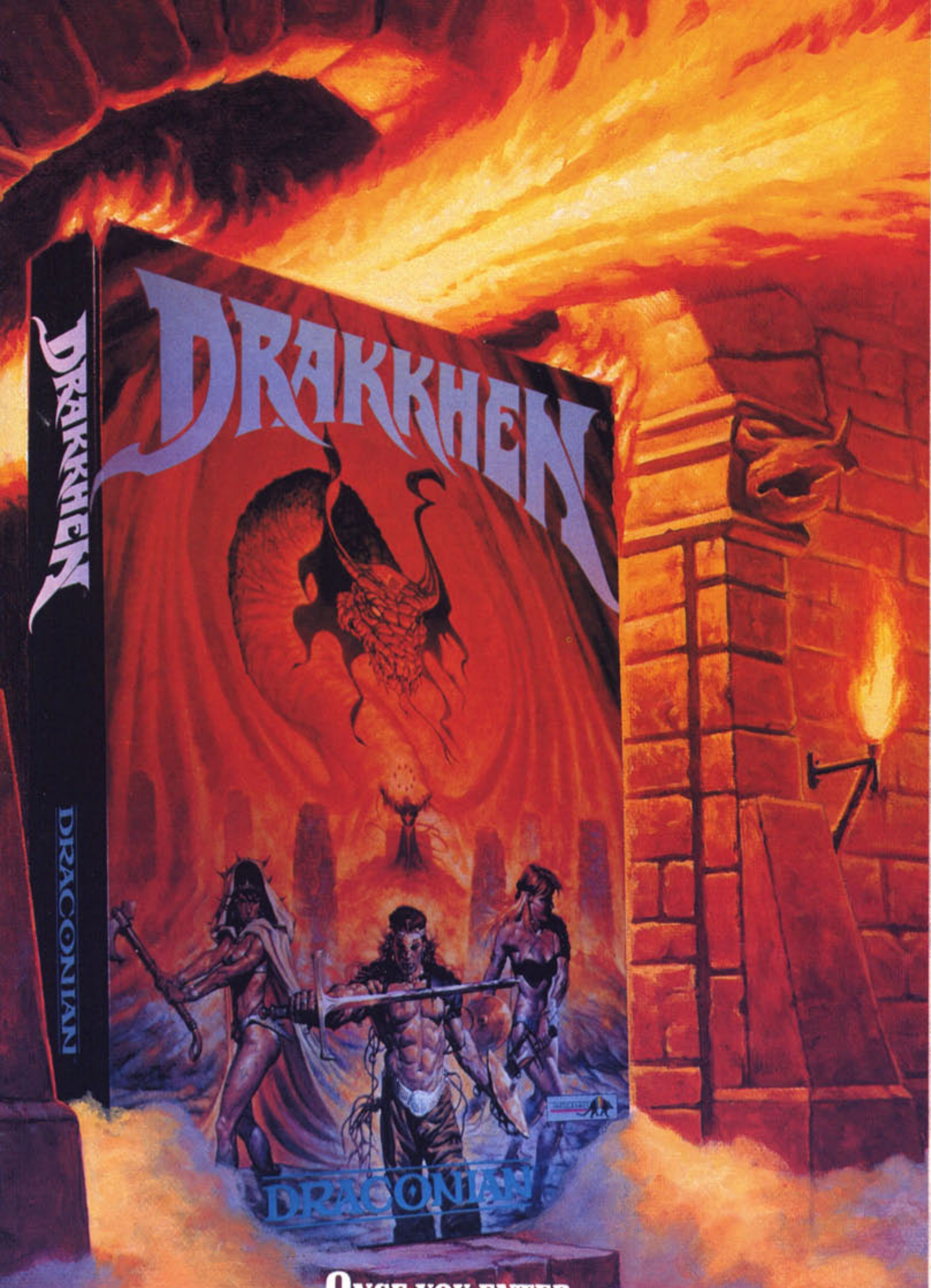
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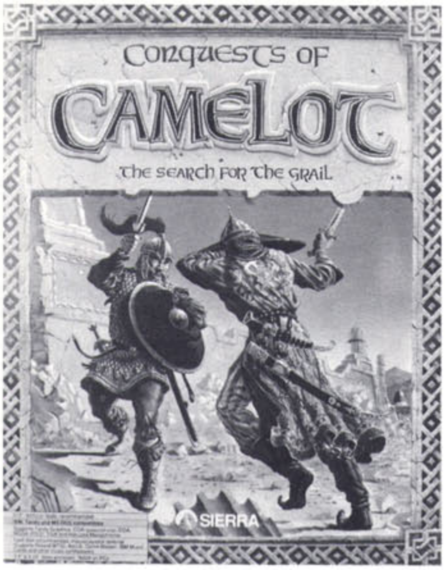
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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games For Nine Years

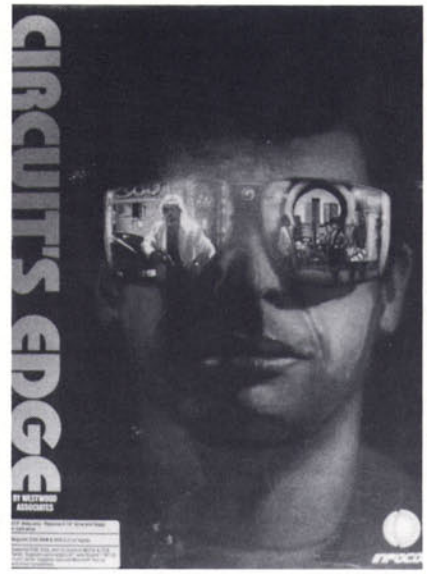
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Psalm 9:1-2

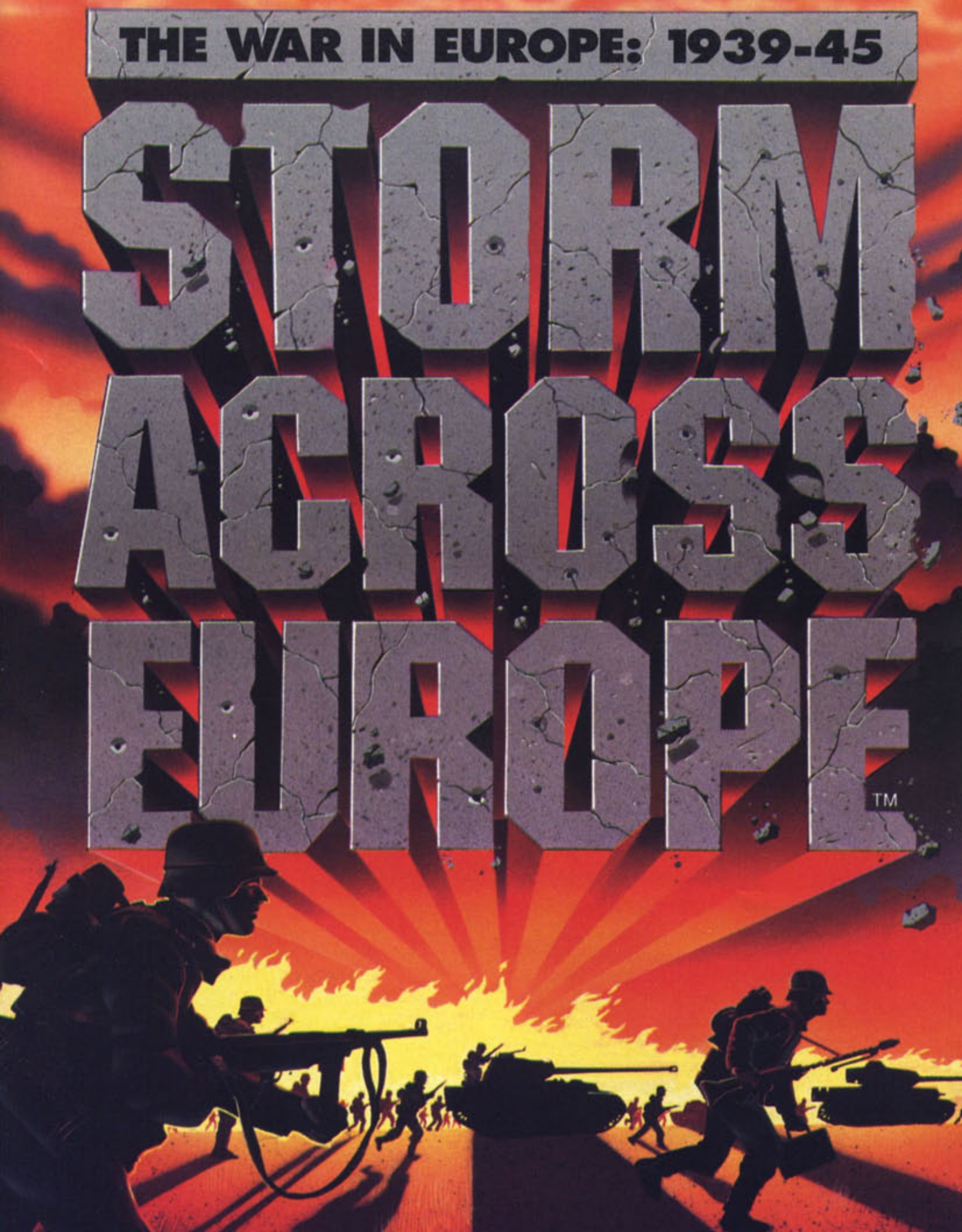
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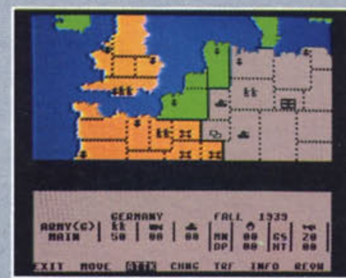
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The blitzkrieg that Hitler unleashed in 1939 swept across Europe like a terrible storm. Now SSI has designed a fast, exciting game that allows you to simulate the entire war on a grand strategic scale — in as short as one evening!

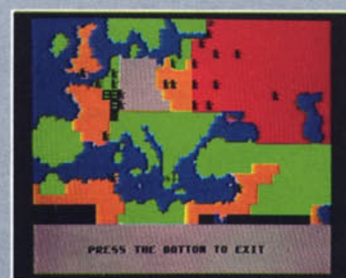
STORM ACROSS EUROPE™ lets you control every facet of the war. Allocate resources for production or advanced research; move armies across the map to conquer territory; mount amphibious landings; launch huge U-boat campaigns; carry out strategic bombing strikes against enemy production centers; send raiding fleets against opposition shipping; and drop paratroop forces on enemy positions.



Multiple scenarios and the ability to change starting levels for each country allow for endless variations. Up to three players can play this game, with the computer controlling the Allies and/or the Russians.



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ESCAPE FROM HELL: "Filmed entirely on location", Hell is a "nice" place to visit, but you wouldn't want to spend an eternity there. This fine looking adventure/quest game is possessed (forgive the pun) with devilishly delightful humor as the player attempts to rescue his buddy from the crags and brimstone of Dante's depths. The characters and encounters are delightful as you party with Genghis Khan, parley with Al Capone, catch Hitler trying to take over. Ultimately, the player must confront Satan himself (the trick, of course, is living to tell about it). This game is hot in more ways than one. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

Fanfare
A Division of Britannica Software, Inc.
345 4th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

TASK FORCE: This is a solid, stand up arcade game pitting one against the hordes of evil and nastiness. This time, the mob, the skinheads and the drug lords have united under the UBG (Ultimate Bad Guy) Hector Vasquez and are out to take over the United States. The player (or players, as two can play, one or both using the keyboard) are special FBI agents with a dirty job to do and inadequate weapons and ammunition to do it (guess where the players get the good weapons and ammo from). The graphics and sound throughout the five US cities which must be cleaned up are outstanding, pushing the Apple IIGS to new heights. ($39.95). Circle #2.

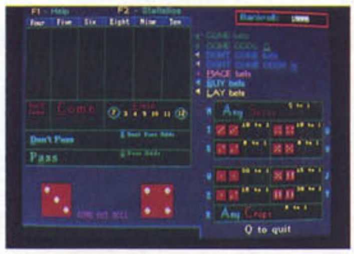
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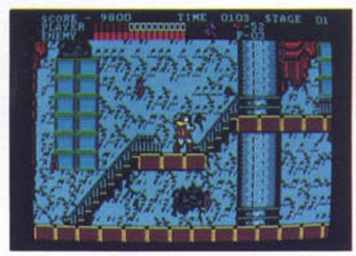
Fat Cat Casino



Earthrise



Blades of Steel



Castlevania

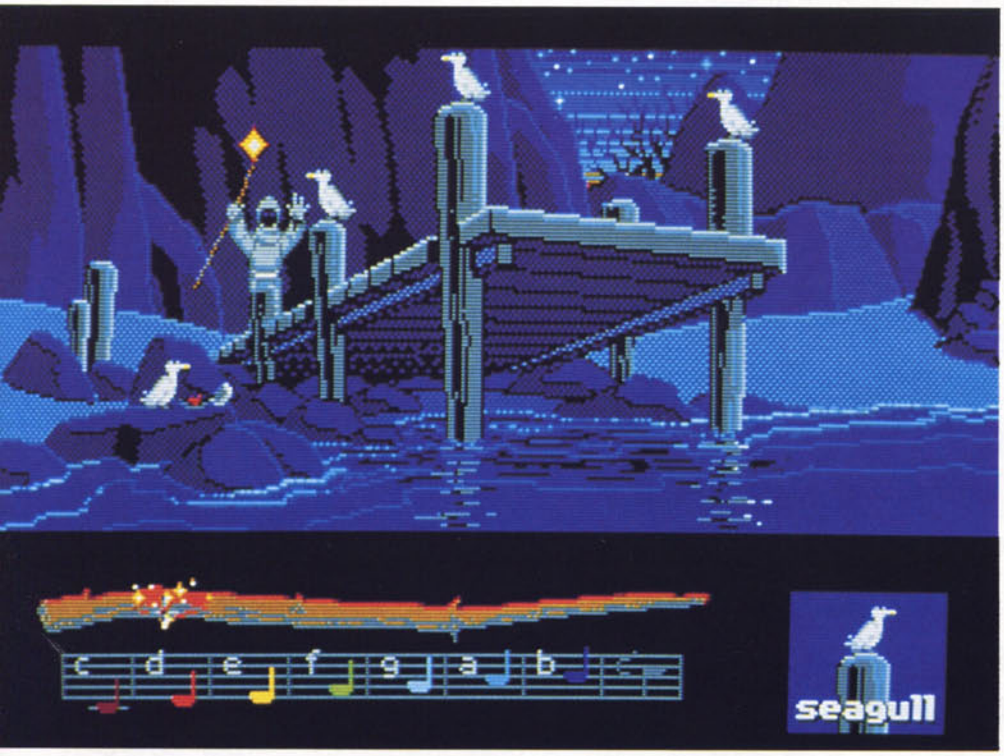
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Las Vegas, NV 89117

FAT CAT CASINO: Any casino software package that includes in its documentation Las Vegas style "How to Play / How to Win" booklets for craps and blackjack can't be all bad. While the video keno and poker games are virtual casino clones (as they should be), players can really improve their gaming skills with the craps and blackjack games. The subtleties and nuances of these two games are included and the opportunities for player improvement is there. A fine, integrated package with real casino rules. IBM ($45.00). Circle Reader Service #3.

Interstel
PO Box 57825
Webster, TX 77598

EARTHRISE: This is a large adventure game where the player is the top trouble shooter for the asteroid mining guild. It seems that an asteroid hurling towards Earth cannot be stopped because the station built there with the reverse thrusters has been overrun by alien life forms. The player has to solve the mystery with limited resources (the company which sends the player is basically cheap). 2.2 meg of memory was required to store this baby, and extensive mapping and

Continued on page 69



The game is fantasy. The interface is magic.

Alone on a craggy hilltop, high above an island shrouded in perpetual mist, your quest begins. But tread gingerly, because while the world of *Loom*™ is breathtakingly beautiful, unspeakable danger awaits the unsuspecting.

Trepidation soon gives way to bravado as you peek inside abandoned tents in the village. Stumbling over a discarded weaver's distaff, you watch in wonder as it gradually glows and resonates with a sequence of musical notes. Tentatively at first, you point the staff and repeat the notes. After considerable experimentation, you may discover the power to see in the dark. Or weave straw into gold. And eventually find the means to leave the island itself.



Not all the Guilds welcome strangers.



A spell weaver's power is not for the sheepish.

A fantastic odyssey ensues, as menacing waterspouts, merciless dragons and exotic cities draw you deeper and deeper into the fantasy. Armed with the distaff's magic power, you stride fearlessly across vast, cinematic landscapes. Seeking the arcane knowledge possessed by the Great Guilds, accumulated and refined since the dawn of time.

Typing is banished from this kingdom.

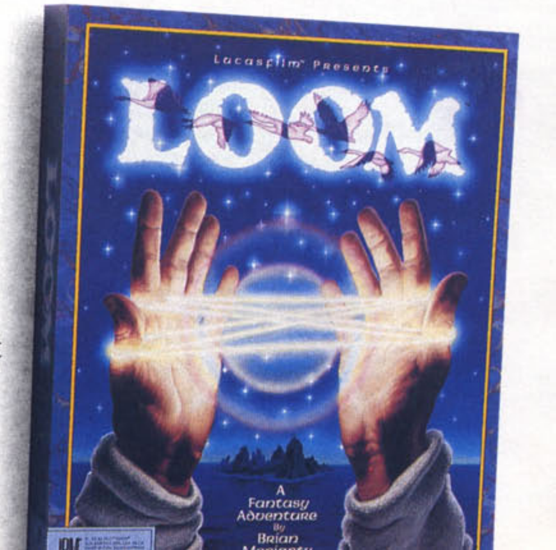
Loom is more than a masterpiece of fantasy storytelling. With *Loom,* Lucasfilm™ Games literally redefines the fantasy computer game experience. Simple point n' click actions move your character, select objects, and perform magic. No cumbersome keystrokes, text parsing, maze mapping, or inventory management intrude to break the spell.

We even transport you to the Age of the Great Guilds before you turn on the computer. With a lavishly produced, 30-minute drama on Dolby® Stereo audio cassette that's included with the game. Recorded by Lucasfilm's Academy Award-winning Sprocket Systems, it introduces the characters and sets the scene for the impending, epic struggle against imposing odds.

Then it's full immersion into *Loom*'s 3-Dimensional, scrolling panoramic landscape. Where detailed animation, high definition graphics, startling special effects and stirring musical score combine to create a total environment. Captivating you from the opening scene to the final climax.

And your quest for a truly magical fantasy adventure is finally realized.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES



For Mature Audiences Only

Dr. Johnny L. Wilson
Computer Gaming World *Editor*

The State of the Industry: Entertainment is a tricky business. That which seems to be harmless fun to some viewers, listeners, readers or players may be dangerous, irresponsible or irreverent to others. That which functions as a warning or exhortation to some functions as insidious propaganda to others. Many computer game designers are currently examining the ethical and philosophical implications of what they place in games and are trying to discover a plan of action in dealing with reality without excluding younger gamers or individuals with strong feelings about propriety.

For instance, a game designer who is working on a fantasy game wanted to know how I, as an evangelical minister, justified the use of "magic" in a fantasy universe when most evangelicals seemed to automatically place even imaginary "magic" under the rubric of Satanic power. He knew that believers like Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and George MacDonald used "magic" in their worlds and wondered how that was proper. In a long, convoluted and somewhat esoteric answer, I essentially stated my belief that "good magic" was being used as both an analogue for "faith" (in antithesis to the empiricism of the modern age which asserts that *everything* can be tested and repeated) *and* "bad magic" as a paradigm for the "occult" desires for power, influence and control over everything which tends to enslave and destroy the quality of life. Therefore, I confidently asserted, whether "magic" is appropriate in a film, story or computer game depends on how it is used and portrayed. Yet, in spite of my position, there will be people who will criticize him for using "magic" in his universe for any purpose whatsoever. Wilson's First Homily on Computer Gaming Propriety, then, is that whether something is "evil" or not depends on how one intends the gamer (reader, viewer or listener in other art forms) to use it. (Gee, I wonder if Stewart Alsop got started this way!)

A publisher recently tried to avert controversy (or, some have contended, add marketing spin) by placing a warning label on the package which indicates that partial nudity, offensive language and occult symbols appear in the game. Before the game is prematurely judged, however, let me note that all of the action in this game takes place in the theological dimension of eternal punishment. Criticizing a designer, whatever his taste in subject matter, for placing occult symbols in "hell" may be something like my own experience of directing Jean-Paul Sartre's "No Exit" as a drama project at a Baptist college. Some were offended because there was an adulteress and a homosexual in the play. "I don't understand the problem," I answered with the emphatic sense of being right that seems to have an inverse relationship with the aging process, "they are, after all, in hell!" Although I might not be quite that indelicate during my present state of editorial wisdom, Wilson's Second Homily on Computer Game Propriety is that offensive words, actions, mannerisms or depictions need to fit the subject matter they are portraying.

Another example for this second homily was provided by Lord British. It seems that there is a bawdy song in *Ultima VI* that has raised a few eyebrows. Some have suggested that it is inappropriate for Lord British, who has personally championed the presentation of virtue in role-playing games, to include such ribald matter. Such a charge is somewhat unfair. After all, Middle English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (writing in a similar culture to that Britannia which is depicted in the *Ultima* series) included *both* "allegro" tales of ribald behavior and reference with sermonic "intermezzos" of authentic theology. The bawdy song seems to follow my second homily.

Still another issue was recently brought to our attention when viewing an unfinished adventure game. In a seedy underworld locale, there is an incredible animation of an adult-oriented nightclub dance being performed on-stage. It fits the setting, sets the mood and is unquestionably suggestive. The producer correctly allowed the scene to remain in the game. However, in a dialogue in the same nightclub scene, a seedy character uses a mild expletive. The writer of the script received an admonishment for using the expletive and was told to remove the word and substitute a euphemism (a euphemism which does not ring true to the character).

This brings us to Wilson's Third (and perhaps, most controversial) Homily on Computer Game Propriety. While we need to reach the point where the art of computer game design is not bound by fear of vigilante vigilance over the transgressions of straitjacketed virtue and reduced to the lowest common denominator, we still need to find some balance between what is meaningful and what is gratuitous. We still need some kind of standardized labeling that tells customers exactly what *might* be considered offensive in a particular product (language, violence, nudity, belief systems, etc.).

State of the Magazine: Alert readers of *CGW* have probably already noticed the July/August date on the cover of this issue. This does not mean, however, that we are going to shortchange our readers (or advertisers) by an issue. There will still be twelve full issues of *CGW* during calendar year, 1990. The fact is, the September issue of *CGW* will go on-sale in mid-August. We had to change our cover date to reflect expanded and more aggressive distribution through **Kable News,** one of the country's largest national distributors. In short, we will have nearly tripled our circulation by the time you read the next issue and you should be seeing us in more stores. Publisher, Founder and Editor-in-Chief Sipe and I firmly believe that *Computer Gaming World*'s commitment to covering the world of computer entertainment as adult gamers writing to mature gamers will be as well-received in the mass market as it has in a more niche market.



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Scorpion's Tale

Circuit's Edge

As Told By Scorpia

Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!

Well, well, here we are in July already. The year certainly seems to be moving along at a good clip. . . As usual, Fred is looking forward to the annual Grues Convention in the Dark Room of Colossal Cave, so he may be a little absent-minded about orders right now. As long as he doesn't mistake your hand for a snack, though, everything should be all right. If he should happen to nosh on your knuckles, however, no problem; a quick trip to the medical clinic in the Budayeen will set things to rights.

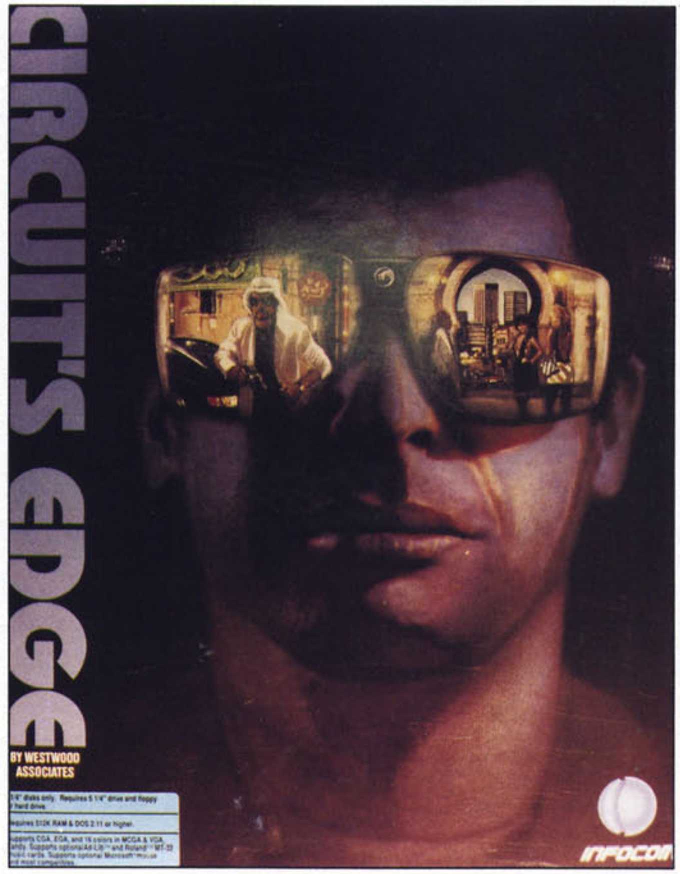
The Budayeen is the setting for *Circuit's Edge*, written by George Alec Effinger and based on characters from his science fiction books *When Gravity Fails* and *A Fire in The Sun*. You do not, however, need to read them in order to play the game, as the action in *Edge* takes place between them, so to speak. You might learn a bit more about the characters, but it won't help to solve the mystery.

Anything can happen in the Budayeen, and usually does. It is a walled-off slum sector of an unnamed Arab city. Crime of all kinds is rampant. Anything—from weapons to sex to the body beautiful—can be bought for a price. This delightful place is overseen by Friedlander Bey, popularly called "Papa", a man of great wealth and power.

Papa, however, has a problem. Someone walked off with a notebook of his, and he wants it back very badly. He has hired Marid Audran, a sometimes private investigator, to retrieve it. The twisting trail of treachery, bodies and even more unpleasant things that leads to this notebook makes up the action of the game.

It is a sort of mystery, then, although not of the usual variety. You don't have to worry about collecting a bunch of clues for the police. Papa could care less about that. All you have to do is find the notebook and bring it to him. Should you need to kill a person or two along the way, well, business is business (and action is action!). As long as you have Papa on your side, the police are the least of your worries.

There are some nice features here, and one that will set your teeth on edge. Mapping is a breeze. The Budayeen is small, being only sixteen blocks wide, so you can't get lost. You can



call up an overall map of the place at any time to see your exact location (there is also a map in the game booklet). A little map box in the lower right shows your location and direction while you're walking around. So you can put away your graph paper for this one.

Another neat thing is Marid's ability to "recall events". Choosing this from the menu (everything except movement is menu-driven) allows you to scroll back through the last fifty events of importance in the game. The only drawback is that you have to go through them one by one, starting with the most recent; you can't pick and choose. However, if you didn't take good notes (for shame!), you can use this feature to refresh your memory.

Saving the game is another matter. You can save only in Marid's apartment, and you get only one save position. Why only one (especially when the save file is very small) is a mystery that you won't be able to solve. . . just keep it in mind. On the bright side, you can restore your position from almost anywhere in the game; you don't have to be "at home" to do this.

Money is important in this game. Marid needs it to buy various items, hand out bribes, and eat a meal now and then. He starts with some, but it isn't much. Papa will provide some kiam (the unit of currency in the game), and Marid can run a few errands for a couple of the merchants to make more.

The quickest way to build up cash, however, is to gamble at either baccarat or roulette. I preferred baccarat, as it played faster, and you can make higher bets (the games, as far as I could tell, were honest). Naturally, you should save before you start a gambling session, in case you have a run of bad luck. However, with a little good luck and some patience, you can build up your initial two hundred or so kiam into quite a tidy sum.

Since the game is set in the future (although not too far), you

(Continued on page 22)

The Maturation of Computer Entertainment:

Warming The Global Village

Once upon a time, there were four very different markets for computer entertainment. First, there was the United States market which was floppy disk-based, made up of sophisticated game players from young adulthood on up and fairly limited in terms of gross sales revenue. Second, there was the European market. This market was largely composed of younger gamers who managed to get hold of lower end machines, depended on tape storage and purchased lower-priced, shorter games that tended to hit the market and disappear faster than last month's hit record on the *Billboard* charts. Next, there was the Japanese market. This market emphasized glossy graphics, intense action sequences, cinematic sound and incredible marketing campaigns waged by prodigious conglomerates such as those of us in the United States are only used to seeing in the film industry.

Finally, there was the videogame market. Largely composed of children, pre- and early teens (predominantly male), this market was highly peer-influenced, geared to the "twitch and flex" of pure reflex games, insensitive to the unrealistic use of violence in a massive percentage of these games and tremendously susceptible to the mechanizations of mass merchandising. It was an accepted piece of industry wisdom that these four different worlds would never meet.

Yet, over the course of the last two years, in particular, we have seen these worlds coming together. There are so many overlapping spheres of influence between these worlds that some of our favorite axioms are melting away before our eyes. No longer are we able to flatly state that "We cover *computer games*, not *video games*". We would sound nescient (to say it gently) and ignorant (to say it bluntly) to continue to assert that "European games and video games do not have the *depth* which *our* portion of the entertainment industry's product have". Indeed, "the times they are a'changin'" and while there may still be a kernel of truth in what has, heretofore, been CGW's position (and particularly, its present editor), this is no longer entirely true.



Commodore's CDTV system with optional accessories

The Times, They Are A'Changin'

For example, **Spectrum HoloByte** scored a critical, commercial and popular success with *Tetris*. So many new computer users became addicted to this fascinating puzzle game that it not only spawned sequels from the same designer (last year's *Welltris* and this year's *Faces . . . TRIS III*), but a host of imitators who, in turn, added their own spin to the concept. **California Dreams** publishes *Block Out*, a three-dimensional action/strategy puzzle game that originally appeared in this country before Welltris (3-D Tetris) and also appears in a coin-op version. **UbiSoft** is working on an action puzzle using flaming orbs and steel balls which seems a lot like a "lightning round" of Tetris. **Taito** has a fast-moving puzzle game called *Puzznik* which advances beyond the pure Tetris concept by including many types of action puzzles, but which was undoubtedly inspired by the Soviet game. The afore-mentioned *Faces . . . TRIS III* is Tetris, using portions of the faces of famous characters (real and fictitious) as the building blocks in trying to form both familiar and unfamiliar faces.

However, the most intricately crafted approach to the Tetris-style game which was displayed at the show was *Columns*, a **Sega Genesis** product using colorful jewels as the building blocks and allowing players to score via diagonals, verticals and S-shapes, as well as the traditional horizontal wall seen in the original Tetris. Another example of this merging industry phenomenon may be seen in sports games. *TV Sports: Football* on the **NEC TurboGrafx 16** may not have all the chrome and depth of the **Cinemaware** versions (no half-time show, roster editors or statistical summaries), but it plays *twice* as fast as the computer versions and allows up-to-five players to compete by using one of the TurboGrafx's many hardware enhancements. **Sega**'s *Super Monaco Grand Prix* may not have the detailed polygon-filled backgrounds of **Electronic Arts**' state-of-the-art *Indianapolis 500: The Simulation* (much less offer the realistic physical model running underneath the **EA** game), but the bit-mapped graphics on the car itself are getting there and **Spectrum HoloByte**'s *Vette!* looks like it's going to give Sega a legitimate racing simulation on the **Genesis** platform.

Meanwhile, the traditional **Nintendo Entertainment System** seems to be discovering game depth as **Data East**'s *Al Unser Jr. Turbo Racing* offers an extremely balanced blend of race/car strategy and flat-out "pedal to the metal" action. The times, they are a'changin'.

To be sure, video game manufacturers tend to pitch their games in the buzz words of a younger audience: "boss monsters with larger sprites"; "awesome sounds the other guys can't touch"; "ability to target on multiple-scrolling axes" and "really, cool action". Yet, the introduction of third party developers from the floppy-disk based world of computing cannot help but introduce new ideas of "gameplay" and "depth" into the overall equation. Games like: **Electronic Arts**' *Populous*, **Accolade**'s *Ishido: The Way of the Stones* and **MicroProse**'s *F-15 Strike Eagle II* on the **Genesis**; **Koei**'s *Genghis Khan* and *Bandit Kings of Ancient China*, as well as **Electronic Arts**' new "Michael Jordan" sports games under development on the **NES**, and **ICOM**'s *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* game on the **TurboGrafx 16** with CD-ROM cannot help but advance the idea of gameplay on the video game front.

CD Or Not TV

One technological advancement that is sure to affect all four worlds of computer entertainment (as well as bring them together) is compact disc storage. **Commodore** hosted a press conference in the world-famous Wrigley Building to officially announce **CDTV** (Commodore Dynamic Total Vision). Expected to be on the market before the end of the year with, at least, 100 computer entertainment, education and reference titles and supporting the anticipated 300+ Compact Disc Plus Graphics (CD+G) of the music industry, CDTV looks potentially viable. In fact, the only disparaging words to be heard concerning the machine had to do with **Commodore**'s abysmal record of customer and technical support in the past.

Commodore has already started to address these issues with its *Commodore Express* program of 24-hour telephone support and the willingness to have **Federal Express** pick up

one's malfunctioning machine and send it to the factory service center on a priority basis. This support system is already in place for the Amiga and will be utilized for CDTV, as well.

CDTV is basically an Amiga 500 with one megabyte of RAM. It has no keyboard, but has a Compact Disc drive that can read ISO 9660 standard computer data, as well as the CD+G standards. It is operated with an infrared remote controller and is designed so that it can be operated from across the room, just like one accesses the television, VCR or CD player. If so desired, one can add a disk drive, keyboard and mouse in the future in order to use the machine as *both* a CDTV and Amiga 500. Nolan Bushnell, credited by many as the father of the video game industry, believes that CDTV will really become the information center for the home of the future that many people had hoped the personal computer would be.

Development of entertainment products for the CDTV is well under way. Since **Interplay** has already developed *Battlechess* on a CD (with literally thousands of animations) for the **FM-Towns** machine, they will be releasing a similar Battlechess CD for the new **Commodore** machine seems a certainty. **Cinemaware** has already placed a version of *Defender of the Crown* on CD-ROM and expects to place that version on CD for the new machine, as well. However, the CD version of *TV Sports: Football* for the new machine is expected to be a new, full-blown program. **Accolade** is expected to offer a Jack Nicklaus program that will feature real scenery and up to 8,000 photos. In addition, one can expect that programs being prepared for other CD platforms, such as **Activision**'s *Cosmic Osmo*, **Maxis**' *SimCity*, **Three-Sixty**'s *Harpoon* and **ICOM**'s *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* will soon be converted.

Those who do not wish to wait for compact disc entertainment products have two current options. Those who can afford the price of a standard CD-ROM drive for the IBM will find that **Software Toolworks** and **Access Software** have enlarged your potential library of CD-ROM games by putting out game packs of several classic titles. The Access involvement with CDs is exceptional news because they can take the audio signals (DSP files) off CD tracks and convert them to *RealSound* code. In addition, **Sierra** unveiled two CD-ROM titles for MS-DOS machines that had tremendous potential. *Mixed-Up Mother Goose CD-ROM* uses the extremely effective technique of digitizing backgrounds from colorful paintings (as in *Keeping Up With Jones*. It is basically the same game as before, except that it has enhanced graphics and a neat surprise with regard to the voicetrack. *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* comes with both an English and Japanese voicetrack on the same CD. Don't expect the Japanese voicetrack to come across as a poorly dubbed, B-movie, however. Both versions have the voices synchronized with the animation. **Sierra** plans to release multiple language versions of future CD products, as well (English, Japanese, French and German). *King's Quest V* will be released in CD-ROM format, too. It uses the same type of painted background look and a full cinematic perspective. With multiple language versions, three of the four worlds of computer entertainment come even closer together.

Yet another indication of how the four worlds are coming together is the **TurboGrafx** CD-ROM drive which is currently on-sale. **Cinemaware**'s *It Came From The Desert* with digitized film footage (of live actors) is nearing completion on that format and **ICOM**'s impressive version of *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* (complete with digitized footage and sound) looks like it will be ready by Fall, 1990. In the meantime, one of Japan's hottest action/adventures, *Ys* (both volumes one and two), is now available for the TurboGrafx 16 on one compact disc.

As noted in CGW's report on the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, the TurboGrafx 16 CD-ROM device plays CD+G discs, as well. This is very significant because the company has just signed a major development deal with **Warner New Media** to create products which utilize the CD+G technology to create interactive entertainment. For example, one could use a menu-

(Continued on page 41)

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The Rumor Bag

by "Pappy" Doolittle



It was a mob scene at Chicago's Meigs Field. An aviation museum was sponsoring an auction of vintage aircraft in order to sustain its operations and I wasn't about to miss any of it, even if I didn't have the hundred thousand dollar deposit required for buyers to attend the auction.

So, I merely appropriated a pair of overalls with an appropriate aviation service's name emblazoned on the back and hopped a fence separating the airport and the museum proper. I ducked into the hangar closest to the auction, intending to find a window close enough to see and hear what was going on. Of course, I wasn't expecting to come face-to-prop with a B-52E, reminiscent of the one in Dale Brown's *Flight of the Old Dog*. It reminded me that **Three-Sixty** is planning to publish a game based on the Dale Brown novel.

I was lovingly admiring her fuselage when I heard the first plane going under the gavel. I tiptoed over to the window and listened as the auctioneer began his spiel for a Grumman-built F4F-4 Wildcat. I could just imagine the plane taking off from a carrier deck during some of the action in the Pacific. In fact, I vowed quietly to myself that I would be more careful with such magnificent planes during my next session of **Strategic Studies Group**'s *Carriers At War*. I still play the Apple II version, but I'm really excited about the much enhanced IBM version due prior to the end of the year. Besides having an improved artificial opponent, I can't wait to see the enhanced graphics.

A fellow who looked amazingly like Wild Bill Stealey was bidding on a P-51 and I couldn't stand the suspense, so I looked into the bomb bay of the mothballed bomber. I noticed a strange piece of machinery inside. Since I'd just talked to Anita Sinclair of Magnetic Scrolls about her father's role in getting the Enigma machine (codenamed "Ultra") which cracked the Axis' coded signals during World War II, I wondered if this machine had a similar purpose. I fed some cryptic messages I'd palmed in the Silicon Valley through it and came up with several preposterous rumors. According to the machine, one note said that **Three-Sixty** was planning to publish a World War II version of *Harpoon*, another indicated that **SSG** was planning to release a 16-bit version of *Russia*, called *Barbarossa*, by September and *Operation Overlord* (based on the *Barbarossa* system) by late July; and still another indicated an August ship date on *Interceptor*, the first **Renegade Legion** game from **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**.

In fact, I would probably still be there, frantically breaking cyphers from **Mediagenic**'s industrial espionage . . . er . . . marketing department, except that two beer-bellied ex-linebackers (otherwise known as security guards (otherwise known as "rent-a-cops")) crashed through a hangar door and told me to "reach for the sky", an aerobics exercise which is not fun anywhere, much less inside a B-52 bomber.

They frisked me, handcuffed me and, just between us, beat me about the head a bit. Good thing that bag I wear has padding, huh? They asked me what I was doing there and I admitted that I had trespassed long enough to see the auction. They asked me what I was doing in the B-52 and I explained that I was trying to get the facts about *BattleTech II*. Talk about breaking a code! These guys loved both *BattleTech* and *MechWarrior* and couldn't wait to hear about the: 256 color palette, AdLib and Roland sound support, addition of more than 50 new types of 'mechs, use of air units and infantry support, and capacity for commanding up to twelve combat units.

I almost convinced them to unlock my handcuffs and let me go when I told them that *BattleTech II* would include 20 different scenarios, each one building on the ones before. They were practically salivating when I told them that the play is balanced so that the game begins with one-on-one command, moves to multiple unit command and finishes up in a strategy game where resource allocation between units forms the difference between winning and losing.

Then, their supervisor stepped in. Even in plain clothes, he looked like your typical spook (a spy by any other name). "So, this is the perpetrator?" he asked. The others quickly affirmed my guilt. He turned to me and demanded information. "What did you see?" he shouted.

"Well," I answered, rather intimidated, "I saw some of the notes for **Accolade**'s *Altered Destiny*. Apparently, some guy named P.J. Barrett gets sucked into his television set and finds an alternate world with all sorts of weird and twisted locations like The Forest of Dreams, The Floating Island, The Caverns of Fear, The Caves of Death and Yula Graveyard. Only an ex-Infocom designer could come up with such strangeness."

"I'm talking about real life!" he challenged me.

"Well, I do know that **MicroProse**'s *Covert Action*, their long-awaited spy game is nearing completion." His eyes lit up and I knew I had his attention. "I think they're really planning to do some interesting things with the non-player characters."

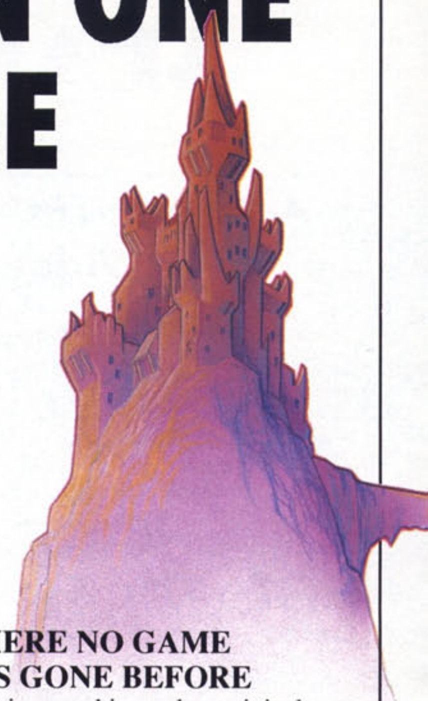
He was obviously waiting for me to go on, but I couldn't go on. The only other product I could have mentioned was **MicroProse**'s space game, but I didn't know exactly what they were going to do with it. So, I did something atypical. I kept my mouth shut.

He turned to the other guards. "Let him go," he commanded, "if we don't let him get to CES, we'll never find out about some of these games." He shook his head and walked out as I thanked my lucky stars for having such a great job.

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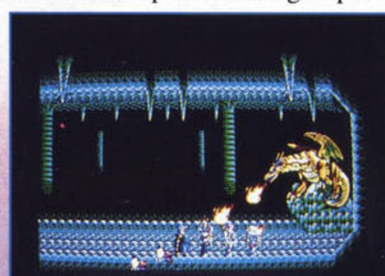


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SEARCH FOR THE KING

Accolade Unleashes Graphic Adventures

by Johnny L. Wilson



Accolade's new series of graphic adventure games is the culmination of two dreams. Both lead designers, Steve Cartwright with *Search for the King* and Mike Berlyn with *Altered Destiny*, envisioned a technological achievement that would enhance their ability to tell stories on the computer.

Dream, Dream, Dream

For Steve Cartwright, best known for a wellspring of action games created during his **Activision** years, the dream was to create a set of tools for developing graphic adventures. The dream began back in the James Levy days of Activision when a team looked at what other companies were doing in terms of graphic adventures. Cartwright was so impressed with what **Sierra** had developed for programmers to use that he longed to develop similar tools and even improve on them. He was unable to do so at Activision, but his move to Accolade allowed him enough reign to work on the graphics enhancements for the "engine" which drives Accolade's new line.

The biggest difference between Accolade's new line and many of the current adventure game products on the market is that the older tools still use many "line and fill" routines. Cartwright wanted to get away from this classic, but unsatisfying method, and include more bit-mapped graphics which could, in turn, be combined with more animation and even some digitization to create more realistic action on the screen.

For Michael Berlyn, **Infocom** alumnus (*Suspended, Cutthroats* and *Infidel*) and science fiction author (*The Eternal Enemy*), the dream has been to create the ultimate parser. As he told *CGW* as early as 1987, "We [Mike and his wife, Muffy] have developed our own engine for adventures that will enable us to release our products in six or seven formats simultaneously." The first such product, intended to be a text adventure in the classic Infocom style, never really appeared in the form which was intended. Nevertheless, Berlyn's desire to create a parser which would be far superior to any on the market has continued. Some of his efforts could be seen in *Dr. Dumont's Wild P.A.R.T.I.* for **First Row Software** (a game which may never gain the attention it deserves because of its avant-garde subject matter), but the parser in Accolade's new line far exceeds that effort. In addition to a larger total vocabulary, the new parser allows the use of adjectives without locking up, understands many incomplete sentences and isn't often sidetracked by slightly misspelled words.

Together, the two experienced designers hope they have created a set of graphic adventure tools that will enable the interface to become more transparent than ever. With hotter graphics, a more sophisticated parser and two distinctively different stories, they believe Accolade's new graphic adventure line will be a contender for industry leader.

More Music and Les Manley

The protagonist of Cartwright's game, *Search for the King*, is almost certain to remind one of Les Nessman (of the old "WKRP in Cincinnati" television series) minus the band-aids and without the paranoia. Coincidentally enough, Les Manley works at television station WILL and gets even less respect than Nessman did. Indeed, just as Jennifer on the television series was the only one who seemed to respect *that* Les, Stella seems to be the only one at WILL who respects *this* Les. The major difference between the two is that Les Manley *is* extremely competent at his job. He just has to prove it.

This is where the player comes in. By means of a marvelous cinematic sequence, WILL announces a contest where the winner gets a million dollars for finding the "King" of rock and roll. The television executives figure that, since rumors of appearances of the former "King" get plenty of attention and the "King" is not really alive, they will get lots of publicity, but never have to pay. Les figures otherwise. He wants to show them up by finding the "King" and forcing them to pay. After all, he has his entire lunch hour to do so.

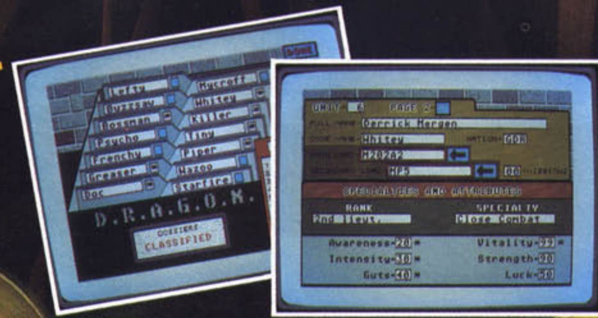
Now, the game proper begins. Of course, the cinematic ef-

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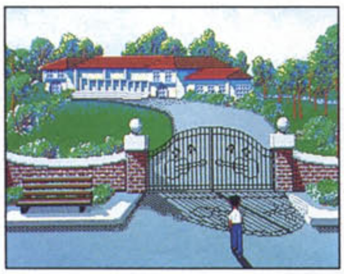
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fects are not over. In order to have realistic animation of the beautiful secretary (love interest), Steve videotaped an attractive Accolade employee and digitized the sequence where she walks to the water cooler. These artistic details are further enhanced by occasional "cut-scenes" that personalize some of the action and conversations and full-screen oblique perspectives providing a larger geography for the scene than the traditional room-by-room approach.









The versatility of the parser can be demonstrated in an early scene where Les needs to get a set of keys from his boss's desk. Normally, one would expect to spend a great deal of time trying to guess the right words to navigate through the conversation. In *Search for the King*, the player merely types, "Ask for a raise" and the program launches into a complete, humorous and insightful interaction between Les and his boss. The player is privileged to watch some of the game unfold without having to feel responsible for advancing the conversation. This is not simply chrome, however. The fact is that there is a verbal clue within the conversation that tips one off on how to solve the pending puzzle.

In fact, the two designers are so confident of their improved parser with its ability to understand specific verbs that they even have a little fun at the expense of the competition. For example, if one happens to utilize the generic, universal verb "use", one receives a tongue-in-cheek admonition that asks if the player thought he/she were playing one of those half-dome adventure games. Hmm! Wonder which company near Yosemite National Park they could possibly be referring to? The parser knows if the player has been "bad" or "good", too. Players who use suggestive language may have some rather intriguing responses thrown back at them!

No Business Like Show Business

Like most first-line products in today's computer entertainment industry, Accolade's new line will use VGA resolution and an extended palette to convey some of the excitement of the story. In addition, the designers have independently joined a recent movement in adventure games of opening the visual vistas of the story through different sized figures, scenes and perspectives in order to get away from the traditional (and sometimes claustrophobic) equivalent location-by-equivalent location schemata of some adventure games. Cinematic influences are no longer restricted to particular software publishers, but are pervading the entire genre.

Some of the versatility of the graphics can be seen when Les walks down the street and visits the circus (complete with carnival freaks). This scene has two animated amusement rides and a half dozen independently animated characters ("characters" being the operative word). In fact, the player will want to be careful not to think any of these characters are "beneath" his notice.

Those who enjoy the delicate curves of the fairer sex will be ecstatic with the swimming pool sequence in Las Vegas, a beautiful bonanza of blonde babes. If that doesn't happen to be enough, the desert pay-phone sequence leads to a "romantic" cut-scene where Stella reveals her true feelings for Les in full-screen animated splendor. For those who like the more humorous moments in a story, the animation surrounding a certain "King Impersonator" contest is hilarious and engaging. Throughout the product, the graphics attempt to fit the emotion.

Who Will Answer?

Although many designers have opted for a "simpler is better" perspective with regard to developing puzzles, Cartwright and Berlyn have decided that they will stick to creating some challenging and surprising puzzles. Like the **Infocom** games of an earlier epoch, the puzzles in the Accolade line will always be entertaining, even if they are not always logical. Players who are tired of having the puzzles handed to them on a silver platter should enjoy the subtle challenges to be found in the new series. So, players will have to be sure they add those strange items to their inventories. One never knows when dental floss and free tickets may come in handy.

I Believe

Accolade's *Search for the King* offers an unusual story, challenging puzzles, impressive graphics, friendly interface and plenty of surprises. It is probably the best "first effort" we've seen from a company publishing a genre product. Where one generally expects to be more lenient in an appraisal of a "first effort", Cartwright and Berlyn have parlayed their disparate experiences as game designers into products which will push the envelope of adventure gaming. Frankly, "first effort" or not, this game *will* play in Poughkeepsie. Long live the King!

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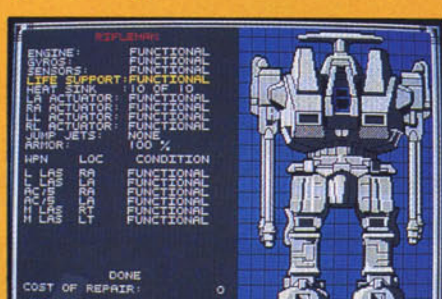


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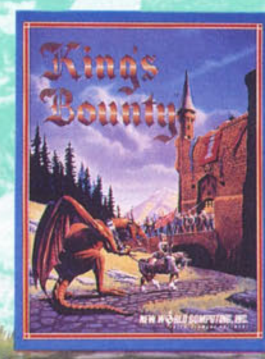
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Scorpion's Tale

(Continued from page 10)

need to become familiar with "moddies" and "daddies". These are little chips that Marid can plug directly into his skull. They provide him with skills and knowledge he doesn't have on his own, and also have effects (good and bad) on his physical attributes.

Moddies provide special skills, and minor personality changes. They are very minor; Marid never forgets who he is, or what he's doing. He *does* get some odd thoughts and impulses from time to time, however. Daddies can also provide skills, or do other things such as monitor body functions or project the current time on his vision. My favorites to have chipped in were Kung Fu Master (a moddy) and Alpine Jack (a daddy) which did very nice things for Marid's stats, as well as making him a darn good fighter (which is handy when jumped by muggers).

The Story So Far

So here's Marid just hanging out in his apartment when his good buddy Saied calls and asks him to pick up a package. The package business is just to get Marid out of the house and into the game. Shortly after he finishes this little task, the real action begins when he's directed by Papa to see a man about a notebook.

Unfortunately, the man is dead (*very* dead). Not only dead, but horribly mutilated in a way that would make Jack the Ripper wince. Get used to these gruesome descriptions, because there are more to come.

Naturally, at this moment, a cop walks in the door, and things look bleak for our boy Marid. But he has Papa on his side, so he doesn't get arrested after all. Instead, he ends up taking a trip to see Papa in person and getting some background info on his assignment.

Now it's time for some detective work. Marid has a few clues to work with, and the police will cooperate (if reluctantly) to a point, by providing Marid with a couple of items.

After a little work on his part, Marid's got an answering chip but no answering machine to play it on, a holodisk, and a pawn ticket for a shop that went out of business. Terrific stuff, eh? Well, there's a place you can view the holo, and it wouldn't hurt to ask around about Mustafa's.

It wouldn't hurt to ask people about other things, either, like certain names you've come across. This is something that's very important in the game; often Marid will pick up interesting or important information by questioning others. Check out the street dealers, too; sometimes they have interesting items for sale.

While Marid's making the rounds, a hooker will ask for his phone number. She has other things on her mind than the usual, however, so it might be a good idea to find out what she's up to.

Sooner or later she calls and tells you where to meet her. Guess what you'll find when you get there? Right, another corpse, in just as delightful a condition as the last one. No items to grab this time, but you need to take a closer look (though your stomach may protest) at the body for a clue.

You may have noticed a computer in the police station (and been kicked off when you tried to use it). You need something official before you can go snooping into the files. When you have it, pay attention to what you see on the screen.

By this time, Marid should have bought the answering machine and discovered, not surprisingly, that it's in a language he can't understand. Well, there's one person in the Budayeen with skills for sale, so you might want to ask there. Of course, you have to know what language you want. Did you look at the holodisk?

Ring of Truth

So, now Marid is set on a different path, tracking down a thief. This is a long trail, that leads from place to place (all of them obvious, once you get started with the right one) until it ends at a warehouse, with (of course) another body in extremely unpleasant condition. (Boy, the population of the Budayeen is certainly thinning out fast).

The only object to be found here is half of a ring. It *would* be nice if Marid had the other half. Come to think of it, he should have the other half, too. In that case, you know when and where Marid needs to be, so be there.

It wouldn't hurt to show that half ring to a few people, either. Someone might recognize it. Marid might even learn something helpful. Too bad that when he tries to use the computer again, he's recognized and tossed out of the police station. Ah, well. Tough luck, Marid, but you're a canny guy and you have other ways of getting on that machine.

Finally, Marid has tracked down the thief (yeah, another body, but at least this one is in decent condition for a change) and gets the language chip he needs, although whether or not the message is really helpful is another matter. There isn't time to worry about that, however, because, soon afterwards, a frantic call comes in from Muhammad.

(Continued on page 58)

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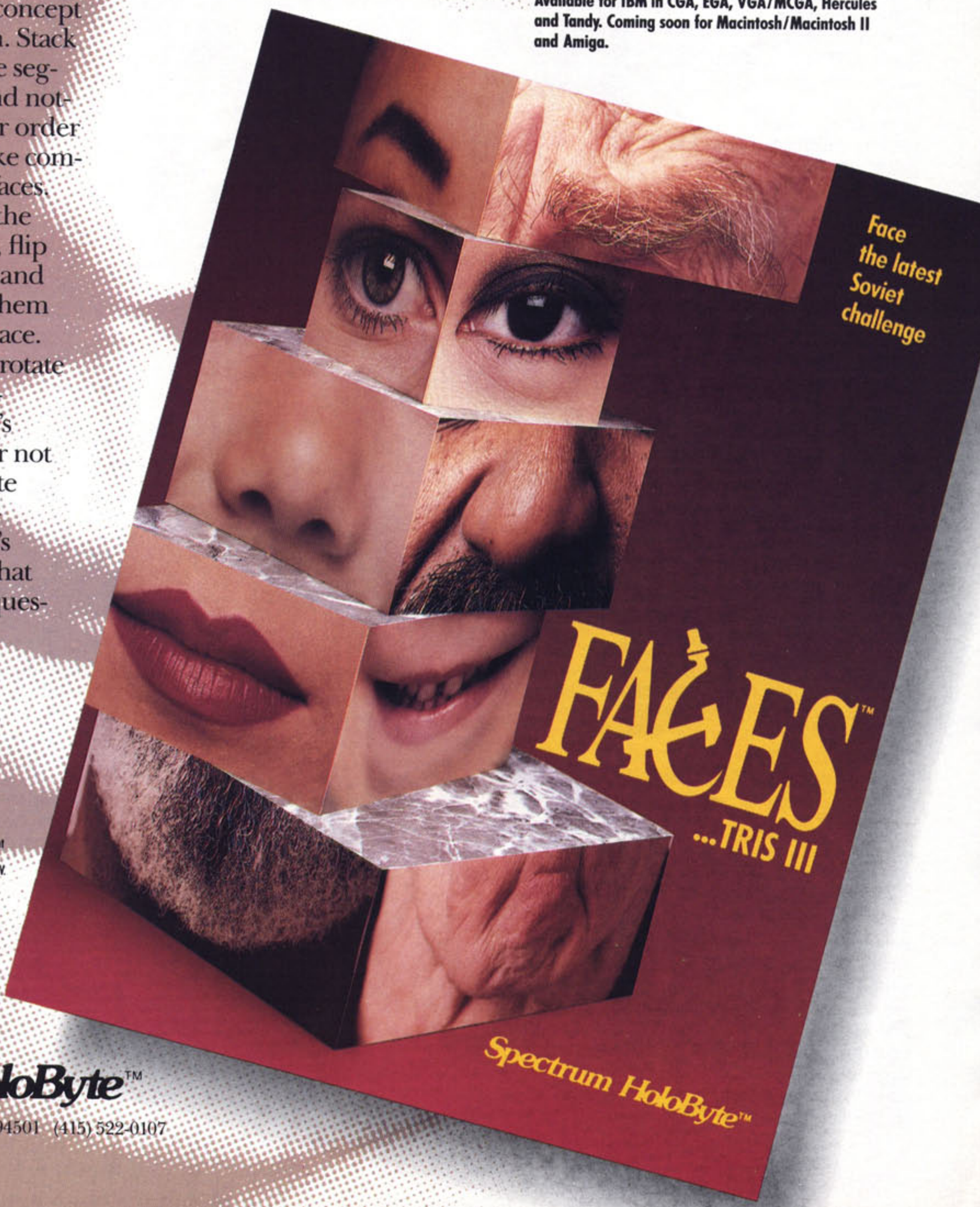


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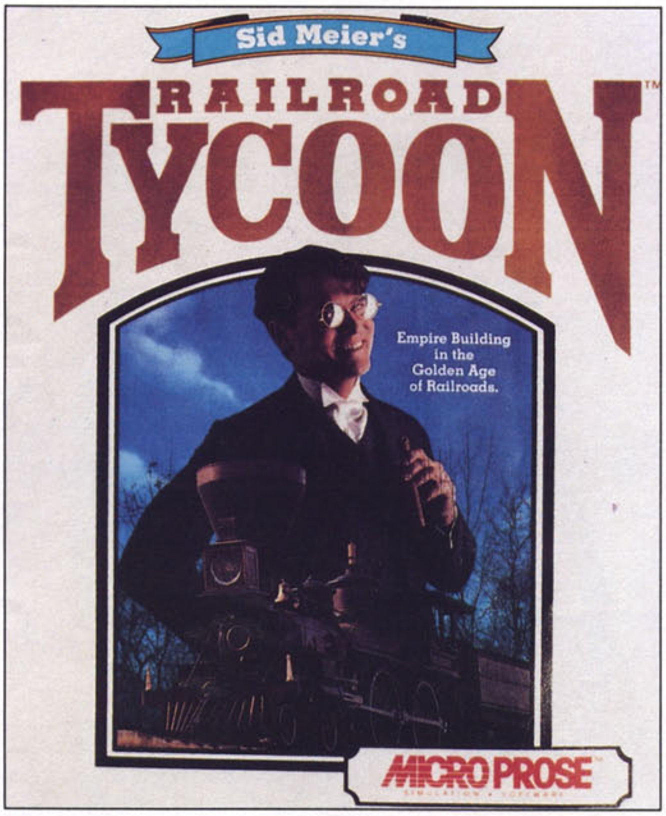


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Tycoon "Tooter"

"Constructive" Tips for Beginning a Game of Railroad Tycoon



The path to the Presidency (or Prime Ministership) is seldom smooth. In **Microprose's** *Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon*, in fact, it often has a 4.0% grade, a 9% interest rate and needs to be double tracked. With no "quick and dirty guide" available to Robber Baronhood, we offer the following tips and techniques to players of Sid Meier's latest simulation.

There's More to a Survey Than Hitting the F10 Key

After determining which map to play on and what will define "reality" in the game (i.e. what size the pond will be and how dangerous the fish are in it), the Regional Display (F1) is presented for the player's initial survey. It might be a good idea to do two things before really viewing this map. First, call up the Game menu and set the speed to "Frozen" so ample time will be available to study it. Second, call up the Display menu, go to Options, and activate the "Resource Map" feature.

The most important aspect of assuring one's future in railroading is the correct placing of the initial line. It is here where the player must develop an understanding of "economic geography", as well as geographic topography. The object of studying the Regional Display is to find an initial line which will not only provide good early growth, but is also well positioned for long term growth. The best method for doing this is to pluck up large tracts of land using the Area Display (F2) and pondering the placement of cities and resources thereon.

Dairy Delight

Exactly what a player is looking for is a "milk run". Three important features are critical to a successful initial line and the establishing of a highly profitable milk run. First, at least two cities must be involved (the larger the better) between which will move highly profitable mail and passenger consists. Second, resources must be nearby, as well as destinations which require or convert those resources into other products (and, ultimately, with one's initial cities as the likely end consumers of these products). Finally, zoom down to the Detail Display (F4) and check out the lay of the land. If proposed rail line is too rugged or has too many tight turns, trains will move too slowly along it.

Going In The Hole With Tunnels

If building a tunnel sounds like a slick idea for an initial line, be warned: it usually isn't. A player's initial line tends to be the central part of his burgeoning empire and, therefore, has a tendency to become double tracked early on in the game. With a tunnel (especially a long one) at the heart of one's railroad empire, it can often become a choke point (and thus a real liability later in the game).

The Fat Of The Land

The "cream" from a milk run is in multi-convertible cargoes. In Europe, for example, this means a run that picks up coal, converts it to steel (ringing up the cash register in the process), takes this recently smelted steel to be converted into arms (more money for the till), and finally hauls these new arms to a fort or port ("ching, ching"). *This* is making optimal use of a freight train! In the United States, one easily finds the old livestock to stockyard to city milk run, in England its hops to beer to villages, etc.

To get the most cream from these types of milk runs, one should look for the largest suppliers of the initial resource. In the first example, one should find the largest concentration of coal mines available and place them under one station. In this manner, freight trains utilizing that station will always be quick to fill with full consists (thus generating maximum revenues at each stop from these "slow freight" cargoes).

Station-To-Station For Collect Calls

Assuming that the perfect chunk of real estate is found (or, more likely, the best compromise location is determined), an important decision must be made before laying any down track. Knowing which two cities will serve as the initial hubs of one's empire is one thing; seeing where and how future hubs might be connected is another. Through some foresight early on, the "angle" of the track laid into each station will help to point it in the right direction for expanding towards planned future stations. Since the human player in a game of *Railroad Tycoon* has to worry about placing stations on a section of straight track without "switches", positioning can be critical (especially when building stations near bends in rivers). Try to think of the "flow" of the line's future connections when determin-

(Continued on page 63)

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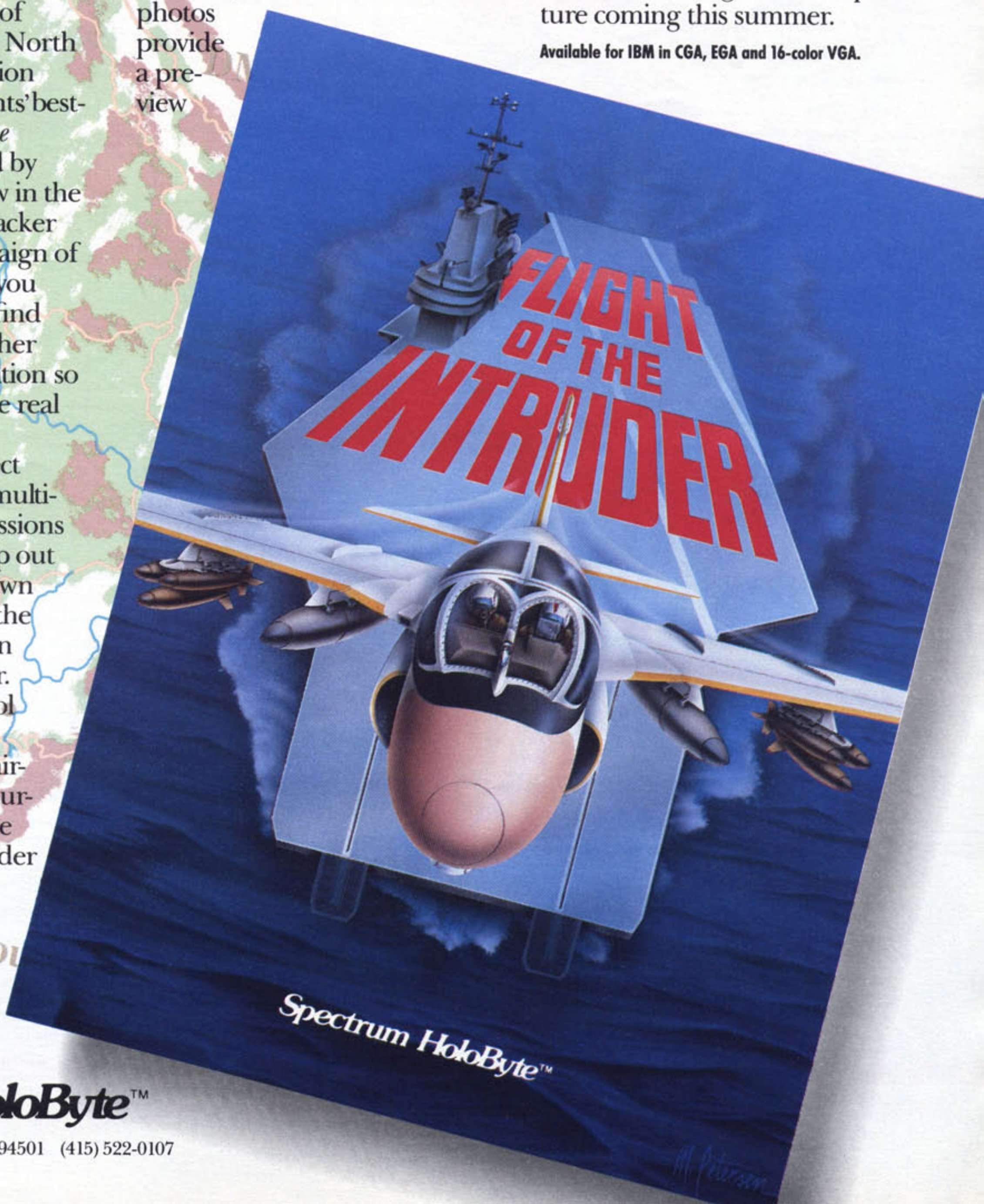
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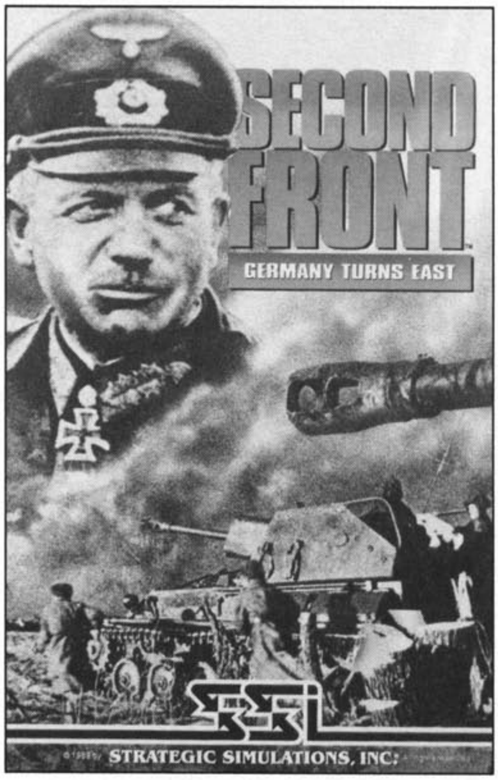
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®

A Second Look at "Second Front"

An Analysis of SSI's "Second Front"

By Alan Emrich and Tom Hughes

As computer wargamers know, often documentation leaves a good many questions unanswered, especially with the more complex and detailed wargames. With the massive design effort that clearly went into *Second Front*, it is no wonder that some things slipped through the cracks. It is the purpose of this article to present *Second Front* players with the strategies and game notes which will help march them to victory.



Delousing

Mr. Grigsby has promised to deliver a 1.1 version of the game which will address most of these problems. (Don't start calling SSI about it—it will be announced). Here are the 1.0 version bugs being corrected:

In the 1941 Campaign Scenario, the German objective of Gorki may become Kazan (this is currently under playtest).

In the 1942 Campaign Scenario, German FW190A's are inadvertently Fighter-Bombers (FB), rather than pure Fighters (F), which makes a difference in their intercept limits.

"Fighter Sweeps" are also unintentional. This is where fighters can keep flying solo missions and drawing out enemy fighters forever. Note that FBs have a one time escort/intercept capacity each player turn, while "pure" fighters can intercept many times (and *should* be allowed to escort only as long as their are bombers going off on missions from the fighter's base).

Fighters may also "stage" an unlimited number of times to different bases and be used offensively at each one. Additionally, aircraft experience could never go over 91% on the Russian Front.

The remaining bugs concern production. In the 1941 Campaign game, the Russians can only move *four* factories to Siberia! (All but four "spaces" in Siberia were already allotted for reinforcement industries).

Also, Soviet industries are inadvertently allowed to produce Western Allied equipment. This is a one-way switch (along with TB-3 bombers), and factories producing these units cannot be switched back.

Finally, if a player accidently switches a factory to a unit type which won't appear soon, it cannot be taken off Research & Development and changed back into production.

Those Aren't Bugs, They're "Features"

Designer Gary Grigsby states that the EVEN play balance setting is for human vs. human or computer vs. computer play *only*. When playing against the computer, it should be given some, if not maximum help (the computer AI attempts to act fairly historically and will not do such "human" things as optimize leader placement, move Russian industries, or envelope units efficiently).

The Combat Values (CVs) on the screen are only *one tenth* of the actual Combat Value of the unit (the German player must realize he has ten times the garrison strength showing on the Western and Italian Fronts).

For those with a quibble about the values for the various tanks and aircraft, designer Grigsby says they reflect his subjective opinion.

Divisions and air groups may be transferred into and out of Finland at will.

Sometimes bombers won't fly a given mission. This is correct, with the designer indicating that such missions are "aborted" (bad weather is the usual culprit). However, an aborted mission allows the bombers to attempt another mission that turn (or even try the same mission again—over and over, if desired, until it is fulfilled).

Factory growth is optimized at fifteen. Once the fifteen level is reached, the chance for additional growth is reduced by 90%. Furthermore, what your factories make may be changed by the computer according to an historical timetable (whether the player likes it or not, but the AI usually works re-tooling to the player's benefit). Granted, these re-toolings only take a week, but changing them back to what the player originally wanted takes *several* weeks.

The actual factory growth formula is: Total Heavy Industry, divided by factory's current unit production cost, equals percentage chance for growth. (For example, with a total Heavy Industry of 100, a 3 production cost unit factory has a 33% chance for a factory to grow, while a 5 production cost unit factory has only a 20% chance).

When resource and oil bearing cities change hands, their value is reduced by one each time. Every city permanently loses all of its population when captured (they are deported or shot, says Grigsby), which effects replacement squads.

What The Documentation Didn't Tell You, Or—README2

This is the "secret formula" section. One will find many features which would be difficult to know since they happen in the programming "where the players cannot see them."

To begin with, the README file mentions "Reserve Corps". There is no such thing. These are, in fact, regular corps. Also, the SS corps appear randomly, if an HQ is created anytime from 1943 on. Again, it is a regular corps, unless the computer is playing the Germans, in which case the AI will fill it with SS units only.

Here's a note of major consequence: Units may be plotted with a 'B' (Bombardment) command, similar to an 'S' (Static Attack) command (i.e., it consumes a second plot). A Bombardment Attack is like a Static Attack (no movement) using only the attacker's artillery. No losses are inflicted upon the attacker (unless the enemy has aircraft participating in the defense). For example, an armored corps with an enemy unit next to it in direction '3' could plot: "3B3B3",

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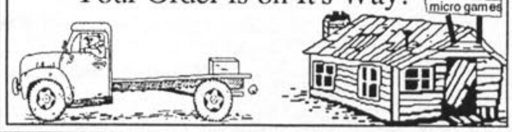
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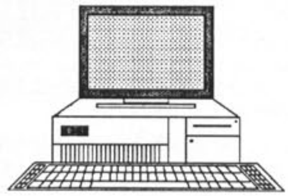


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thus softening up the unit twice with bombardments before actually assaulting the hex. (Remember, the effects of Static and Bombardment Attacks are applied when the number is plotted, not the letter). Bombardment attacks are always shown as "Odds: 0".

All fighters based at the OKH, Western and Italian Front HQs *have double their ranges* (which is handy for combatting Allied bombing of Germany).

Fighter-Bombers (FBs) have a smaller chance of intercepting enemy missions than pure fighters do. Also, FBs can only perform one escort mission for attacking bombers.

TANK BATTALION REPLACEMENT MAXIMUMS

Russian	**Russian**	**German**	**German**
Tank	SPA Rgt.	Tank	Jpzl/Stug
65	21	70	40

Some units may start the game with more than this, but they must be depleted below this number before they will receive any replacements.

Jpz-I's, Marders, Nashorns and SU76's **do not attack**. These tank destroyers only fire back in defense! When attacking, none of these vehicles will be lost.

New combat units may not be created, no matter how many squads, tanks, planes, guns, etc. are stockpiled. New divisions, etc. arrive on a historical timetable.

NEW UNIT EXPERIENCE LEVEL TABLE

Year	**Germans & Finns**	**Russians**	**Axis Minors**
1941	80	50	20
1942	75	55	20
1943	70	60	20
1944	65	65	20
1945	60	60	20
Elite*	90	80	(no change)

**Elite units are the German SS and Russian Guards*

Also, when replacement pools get large enough to reach certain thresholds, all units get replaced with that type of element at 100%, regardless of its headquarters' replacement level.

The computer upgrades units as follows: German SS and other elite units first (Gross Deutchland, etc.). Other German and all Russian units receive the new, improved weaponry from the pools based on the unit's divisional numerical order (i.e., 1st Panzer receives priority over 24th Panzer, etc.).

Russian tank divisions become tank corps in May, 1942 and, starting in 1943, certain German tanks get converted automatically to improved types.

When the program makes a "Leader Roll" (i.e., checks to see if a unit's leadership effects a battle's progress or results), there are two types of rolls. One is the Leader's value vs. a D-10 (a 7 value leader would have a 70% chance of positively effecting the outcome); the other is a the Leaders value squared vs. a percentile (D-100) roll (i.e., that same 7 value Leader would only have a 49% chance of positively effecting the outcome).

The combat phases are sequential as follows:

Attacker Bombards
Defender Bombards
Defender Anti-Tank
Attacker Anti-Tank
Defender Combat Fire
Attacker Combat Fire

Losses from each of these six segments are sequentially applied. Furthermore, if a unit retreats, it will suffer additional losses of up to 50% of its unready troops. These retreat losses are reduced by 75% if the unit's Leadership Value +1 makes its percentile roll. (Thus, our 7 value Leader would have a 64% chance of saving the unready boys in a retreat).

Throughout the war, during the Anti-Tank Combat Phases, losses inflicted by the Axis upon the Russians **are doubled** (due to the superiority of German tactics, says Grigsby). In the clear weather turns of 1941, the Axis inflict **even greater** Anti-Tank causalities while defending against Russian attack (due to inept Russian handling of tanks during this period of the war).

The Russians are hindered by an "Artificial Stupidity" rule during the clear weather turns of 1941 (except on the Maximum Help Russians setting). This means that during first pulse (number zero), units have a 10% chance of actually executing their orders, dropping by 1% per additional pulse. Therefore, the Russians will be virtually unable to cut off Axis units or launch coordinated attacks against them.

The Anti-Tank (AT) formulas are incomplete, so an explanation is in order. The AT Fire phases are *the* phases where tanks are destroyed (except through direct air bombardment). In the subsequent Combat Firing phases, no tanks are destroyed, and every surviving tank is considered "one tank" regardless of its type. In the AT Fire phases, tanks actually use their various attack and defense strengths, infantry squads are considered to have a (minimal) Anti-Tank value, and Tank Destroyer aircraft, Fighter-Bombers and Dive Bombers have their cannon ratings multiplied by five, three and three (respectively) and added to the number of AT guns present.

For the Germans, when calculating the "Average AT" value, add the total number of attack points plus the total number of Flak guns, then divide by the number of platforms (AT guns + tanks). Thus, if the Germans have few platforms, Flak will do in a pinch.

ANTI-TANK VALUE TABLE

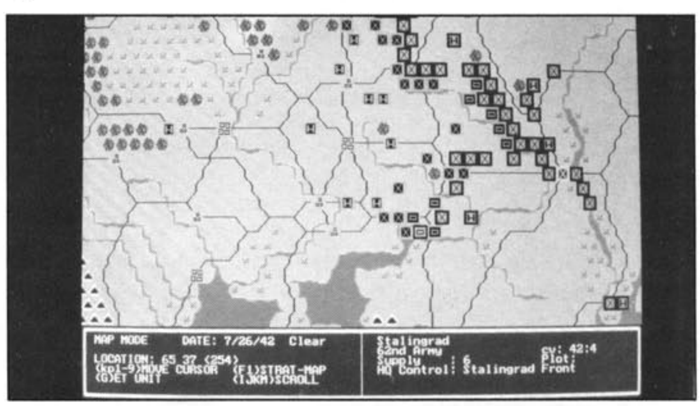
Year	**AT Value**
1941	6
1942	9
1943	12
1944	15
1945	18

All artillery and flak guns retain a value of one throughout the war (note that German flak has an Anti-Tank value). Each "Artillery" factory point produces two artillery, two anti-tank and one flak per week.

Oil centers may be strategically bombed. Damage from these bombings to a level of five are permanent (below five, they have a slight chance to increase in value back up to five).

After Italy surrenders, their factories start making Marders. This production still cannot be altered.

If a factory is assigned to Research & Development, it ceases to be able to increase in value. Its value is rolled against a D-100 (percentile) each week. If the roll is less than or equal to the factory's value, then the availability date for the item being researched is advanced by one week.



Continued on Page 57



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See Reader Input Device on page 47

The Categories

Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem solving.

Simulation (SI): Games based on first person perspectives of real world environments.

Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take your alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

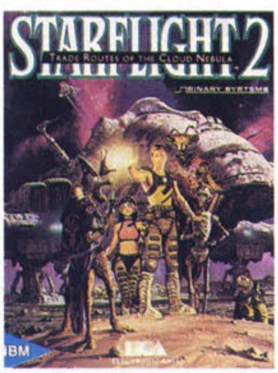
Role-Playing Adventures (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

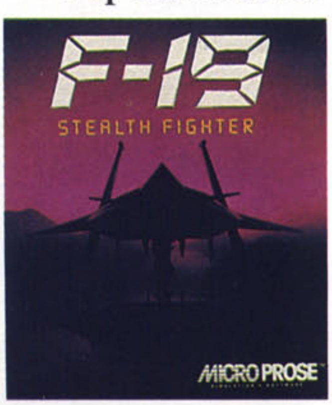
Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of this specific type.

Top Role-Playing



Top Simulation



THE TOP TEN GAMES

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machine	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
1.	*Their Finest Hour*	*LucasFilm*	*Am,I*	*AC,SI*	*79*	*10.52*
2.	*F-19 Stealth Fighter*	*MicProse*	*I*	*SI*	*88*	*9.81*
3.	*SimCity*	*Maxis*	*Many*	*ST,SI*	*112*	*9.73*
4.	*M-1 Tank Platoon*	*MicProse*	*I*	*SI,WG*	*68*	*9.72*
5.	*Harpoon*	*Three-Sixty*	*I*	*WG*	*67*	*9.54*
6.	*Populous*	*EA*	*Am,I,ST*	*ST*	*104*	*9.37*
7.	*Second Front*	*SSI*	*I*	*WG*	*31*	*9.32*
8.	*TV Sports Basketball*	*Cnmwre*	*Am,I,ST*	*AC,ST*	*27*	*9.19*
9.	*Battlehawks 1942*	*LucasFilm*	*Am,I,ST*	*AC,SI*	*86*	*9.15*
	Red Storm Rising	*MicProse*	*C,I,ST*	*SI*	*72*	*9.15*

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	I	WG,ST	33	9.15
12.	MechWarrior	Activision	I	SI,RP	48	9.13
13.	Lords of Rising Sun	Cnmwre	Am	AC,ST	53	9.12
14.	Nuclear War	New World	Am	ST	27	9.07
15.	Wasteland	EA	Ap,C,I	RP	120	9.04
16.	Bard's Tale III	EA	Ap,C	RP	74	9.03
	Hero's Quest	Sierra	Am,I	AD,RP	49	9.03
	Starflight 2	EA	I	RP	54	9.03
	Ultima V	Origin	Ap,I	RP	102	9.03
20.	Dragon Wars	Interplay	Ap,C,I	RP	29	8.97
	Space Quest III	Sierra	Am,I,ST	AD	34	8.97
22.	Romance/3Kngdms	Koei	Am,I	ST,RP	31	8.96
23.	Action Stations	CnflctAnlytic	I	WG	22	8.95
24.	Bandit Kings	Koei	Am,I	ST,RP	23	8.94
25.	Indy: Adventure	LucasFilm	Am,I	AD	23	8.93
	Overrun	SSI	Ap,C	WG	24	8.93
27.	Falcon	SpcHolo	Many	SI	62	8.90
28.	NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	ST	86	8.87
29.	Might & Magic II	NewWorld	Ap,C,I	RP	54	8.81
30.	LHX Attack Chopper	EA	I	AC	25	8.80
	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	Ap,C,I	RP	43	8.80
32.	Genghis Khan	Koei	I	ST,RP	32	8.79
	Project Stealth Ftr	MicProse	C	SI	29	8.79
34.	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	30	8.77
	Battletech	Infocom	Am,I,ST	RP	48	8.77
	Fire Brigade	Panther	Many	WG	22	8.77
	Leisure Suit III	Sierra	Am,I	AD	47	8.77
38.	Airborne Ranger	MicProse	C,I,ST	AC	74	8.76
	F-15 Strk Eagle 2	MicProse	I	SI	57	8.76
40.	King's Quest IV	Sierra	Many	AD	58	8.75
41.	Codename: Iceman	Sierra	I	AD	29	8.72
42.	Breach 2	Omnitrend	Am,I,ST	ST,RP	29	8.71
43.	Neuromancer	Interplay	Ap,C,I	AD	33	8.70
44.	Battlechess	Interplay	Am,I,ST	ST	58	8.68
	Indianapolis 500	EA	I	SI	24	8.68
46.	Curse of Azure Bonds	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	70	8.67
	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	Ap,C	WG	43	8.67
48.	Ballistyx	Psygns	Am,ST,I	AC	20	8.65
	Chessmaster 2100	Toolworks	Many	ST	44	8.65
	Loom	LucasFilm	I	AD	32	8.65
	Police Quest II	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	43	8.65
	Zany Golf	EA	Am,I,ST	AC	31	8.65
53.	Gretzky Hockey	Bethesda	Am,I	AC,ST	38	8.64
54.	Sword of Sodan	Discovery	Am,GS	AC	27	8.63
55.	Pool of Radiance	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	116	8.61

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The Games In CGW's Hall Of Fame Have Been Highly Rated By Our Readers Over Time. They Are Worthy Of Play By All.

Bard's Tale I
Chessmaster
Dungeon Master
Earl Weaver Baseball
Empire
Gettysburg
Gunship
Kampfgruppe
Mech Brigade
Might & Magic
M.U.L.E.
Pirates
Starflight
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
56.	Champs of Krynn	SSI	Ap,C,I	RP	56	8.55
	Sword of Samurai	MicProse	I	ST,RP	43	8.55
58.	It Came From Desert	Cnmware	Am,ST	AD	36	8.54
59.	A-10 Tank Killer	Dynamix	I	SI	40	8.53
	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	I	ST,RP	51	8.53
61.	Drakken	Data East	Am	RP	27	8.52
62.	Carrier Command	Rainbird	Am,I,ST	AC,WG	49	8.51
	DeathTrack	Activision	I	AC	29	8.51
	Knights of Legend	Origin	Ap,C,I	RP	23	8.51
	Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	WG	68	8.51
66.	Silent Service	MicProse	Many	SI	257	8.50
67.	Hostage	Mindscape	Am,I,ST	AC	28	8.47
68.	Manhunter 2	Sierra	Am,I,M,ST	AD	31	8.42
69.	TV Sports Football	Cnmwre	Am,I,ST	AC,ST	50	8.39
70.	Arkanoid	Dsc/Taito	Many	AC	69	8.38
	Wings of Fury	Brodbnd	Ap	AC	52	8.38
72.	Strike Fleet	EA	Ap,C,I	WG	79	8.37
73.	Rocket Ranger	Cnmwre	Am,ST	AC,AD	75	8.32
74.	Modem Wars	EA	C,I	ST	24	8.29
75.	688 Attack Sub	EA	Am,I	SI,ST	59	8.27
76.	Manhunter	Sierra	Many	AD	72	8.25
77.	Police Quest	Sierra	Many	AD	98	8.23
78.	Starglider II	Rainbird	Am,I,ST	AC	65	8.22
79.	Jack Nicklaus' Golf	Accolade	Am,C,I	AC,ST	28	8.21
	Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C,GS	AC	68	8.21
81.	Leisure Suit Lry II	Sierra	Many	AD	52	8.20
82.	Battlegroup	SSI	Ap,C	WG	36	8.19
	Gold of America	SSG	Am,I	ST	28	8.19
84.	Abrams Battle Tank	EA	I	AC,SI	31	8.16
85.	Colonel's Bequest	Sierra	I	AD	28	8.14
86.	Tetris	SpcHolo	Many	AC,ST	46	8.13
87.	Vette!	SpcHolo	I	AC	26	8.12
88.	Stealth Mission	Sublogic	C	SI	36	8.11
89.	Shiloh	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	54	8.09
	Zork Series	Infocom	Many	AD	218	8.09
91.	Faery Tale Adventure	Micllsn	Many	RP	59	8.07
92.	Speedball	Cnmware	Many	AC	35	8.06
93.	Russia	SSG	Ap,C	WG	61	8.05
94.	Sentinel Worlds	EA	I,C	RP	71	8.04
	Techno-Cop	Epyx	C,ST	AC	23	8.04
96.	Test Drive II	Accolade	Am,C,I	AC	42	8.02
97.	WC Leader Board	Access	Many	AC,ST	97	8.00
98.	Leather Goddesses	Infocom	Many	AD	136	7.99
99.	Breach	Omnitrnd	Many	ST,RP	114	7.98
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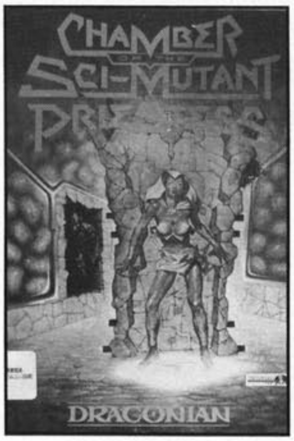
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Boy Gets Girl

Data East's "Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess"

by Allen Greenberg





TITLE:	Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, Atari ST, IBM
REVIEWED ON:	Amiga
# OF PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$44.95
PUBLISHER:	Infogrames
DISTRIBUTOR:	Data East San Jose, CA

Napoleon once wrote: "There is no place in a fanatic's head where reason can enter." Certain fanatics may be without reason, but they also constitute some of the most delightful and murderous gaming adversaries an adventurer could hope to encounter.

Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess is an adventure game in which a group of such fanatics, who call themselves the Protozorqs, are challenged by the player in the role of Raven the Tuner. A "Tuner" is a sort of telepath; Protozorqs are zealous followers of the god Zorq.

Somewhere in a parallel universe Raven's beloved, a woman with the evocative name "Sci Fi," has been captured by the Protozorqs. Because these fanatics believe themselves to be the favored of their god, all other races are considered by them as mere barnyard fodder and designated as "Offa." However, even an Offa may serve Zorq by facing and surviving the five ordeals. That survivor becomes a "Divo." With Divo-hood comes a reward of dubious merit which a sensible Offa may or may not wish to claim.

In *Chamber*, Raven must decide how (or even *if*), he wishes to face the ordeals. His main concern is the rescue of his beloved and their escape from the temple of the Protozorqs. It is a quest made up of puzzles, most of which are set out to be solved intuitively rather than intellectually. The puzzles are not particularly difficult to solve, but they are quite imaginative. The entire adventure has an ethereal and seductive quality which make the story a joy to participate in.

Raven's adventures take place in real-time. The Protozorqs have given him only one hour in which to face the five ordeals and they will adhere to that schedule. Should the temple guards become aware that Raven is working on anything other than his five challenges, the place quickly becomes more dangerous than a convenience store after midnight.

The fact that Raven is a "Tuner" gives him some interesting talents. Among these is the ability to manipulate small objects from a distance or propel himself into a berserk rage for the purpose of committing extreme violence against his enemies. Unfortunately, almost everyone hates a Tuner and would love to see one dead.

Another item in the endless list of oddities to be found in *Chamber* is Raven's Foetus. The Foetus holds some authority with the Tuners, but he and Raven are at the moment not on the best of terms. Nevertheless, the Foetus stays perched at the top of the graphic screen, providing hints and advice filled with gratuitous misspellings.

Chamber includes some of the most interesting sounds and graphics yet to be found in an adventure game program. The three-dimensional views of the temple rooms and hallways are filled with sculpted mystic missives and obscure objects of faith.

Color, depth and detail are abundant. When Raven moves or manipulates one of the strange objects, the walls resound with a convincing and appropriate echo. At times, however, the demonic chants and inhuman sounds produced by the program may become quite unnerving for any neighbors who might be eavesdropping.

When Raven interacts with another character, a window slides or materializes into place, displaying a close-up animation of that character. This is accompanied by the sounds of humanoid squeaks and rumblings which make the encounter either more realistic or just more bizarre. These encounters may also include some highly animated combat, the results of which are strictly controlled by the program. There is no arcade interaction in *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess*.

In addition to the scenery, the *Chamber* screen is rich in equally strange-looking icons. It is entirely through these icons that commands in the game are given. The Amiga and ST versions use the mouse to its fullest potential to manipulate Raven and select his options. IBM users without that digital rodent must pound their keyboards instead. For each decision Raven must make, a very graphic representation of his brain (from the stem, looking up) appears on screen, adorned with "action bubbles." By selecting a bubble with the curser, Raven is made to choose that action.

Tuning Into Triumph (Hints)

The documentation's clever fiction suggests that Raven may not need to complete the five ordeals in order to rescue Sci Fi. This was not the present reviewer's experience. Instead, Raven and Sci Fi were not able to escape from the temple when Raven had not solved the five ordeals.

Also, Raven should be discreet in using his awesome Tuner-talents while solving the five ordeals. The energy to use these talents is not without limit and Raven will need all he can salvage once he goes off on his own to search for his beloved.

Tuning Out The Troubles (Complaints)

The story is a good one but it ends rather abruptly. The elaborate presentation of the program (not to mention its hefty price tag) seem to demand a longer, more convoluted plot. Since the program fits onto only one (Amiga) disk, there was certainly room for more adventure.

Some players will also be unhappy to discover that the copy-protected disk must be write-enabled in order to run properly or to save a game in progress. The susceptibility to damage of a disk which is both copy-protected and write-enabled make it a poor choice for any program. Perhaps **Data East** will reconsider and avoid using it in the future.

Devoted Observations (Conclusions)

Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess is an imaginative adventure game in which the sounds and graphics deserve special merit. Fans of puzzle-based adventures will find it enjoyable, if not terribly difficult. Only the story's relative brevity separates it from perfection.

Under the Sea

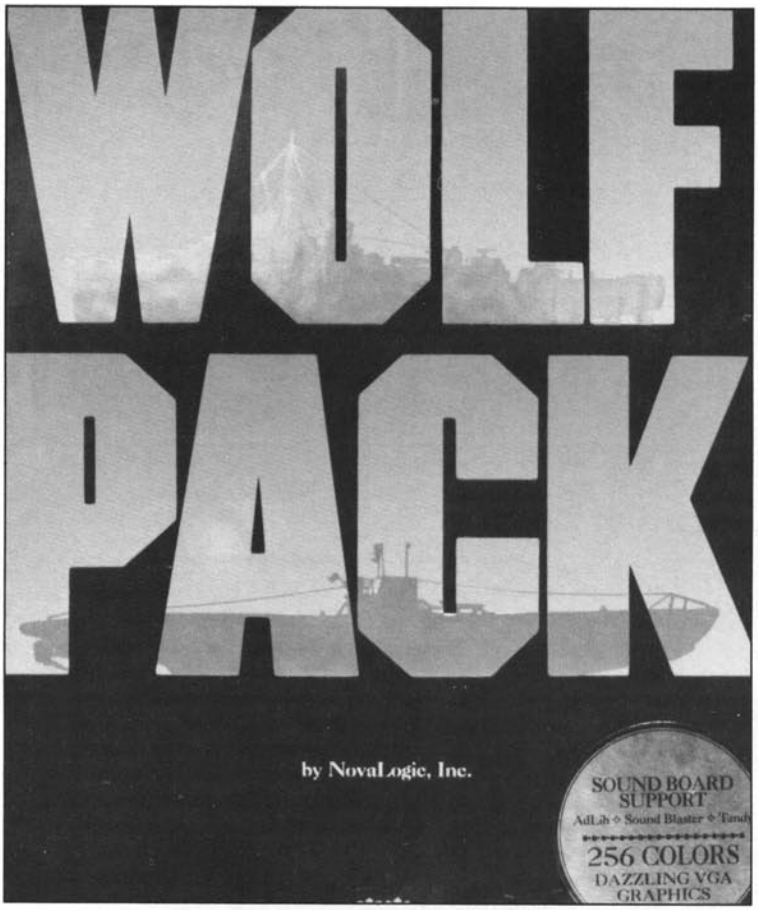
Broderbund's Wolfpack

by M. Evan Brooks

TITLE:	Wolfpack
SYSTEM:	IBM VGA Graphics Support AdLib and SoundBlaster Support
# PLAYERS:	0-2
PRICE:	$54.95
DESIGNER:	John Garcia
PUBLISHER:	Broderbund San Rafael, CA

WolfPack is a "simulation" of the submarine wars in the Atlantic Ocean during World War II. The documentation notes that it "is a precise simulation . . . With attention to detail and interactivity exceeding that of other current implementations . . . [T]he game offers you the unprecedented realism of a full-scale, real-time, strategic encounter" (cf. Manual, page 10). In fact, *WolfPack* is a game "dressed up" as a simulation, but which, in fact, offers little historical accuracy. This is not to say that *WolfPack* is a failure as a design—it *can* be fun to play, but it is a fact that there is little to learn from this product in a historical sense.

The product is, in fact, two games. That is, one may choose to either captain the U-boat(s) or the surface vessels. Most prior releases have concentrated on one aspect exclusively; Broderbund's game allows either perspective. Finally, the "Mission Creation" allows one to recreate his own scenarios in a readily-accessible format.



Submarine Shorthand (Documentation)

The documentation is professionally produced and yields a clear understanding of the game mechanics. However, the instructions for loading scenarios are somewhat ambiguous. While the mechanics are theoretically explained in the "Mission Creation" portion of the manual, a player attempting to load the pre-existing scenarios is likely to be easily confused as to the loading mechanics.

In terms of historical background, the manual is limited to four pages and, at that, some of the facts therein are incorrect! The manual notes the historical threat as having inspired Jellicoe's famous "turn-away command" during World War I's Battle of Jutland. In fact, the actual torpedo threat was from destroyer squadrons and not submarines. The World War I submarine was incapable of High Seas performance with the Imperial Battle Fleets.

Also, the scenarios note the "Happy Time" as occurring off the English Coast (1939). Historically, the "Happy Time" was the period immediately after U.S. entry into World War II (January - June 1942) wherein the German submarines lurking off the East Coast had easy pickings, since the Americans had failed to institute convoy procedures or blackouts along the seaboard cities (in effect, highlighting the merchant targets for the U-Boats).

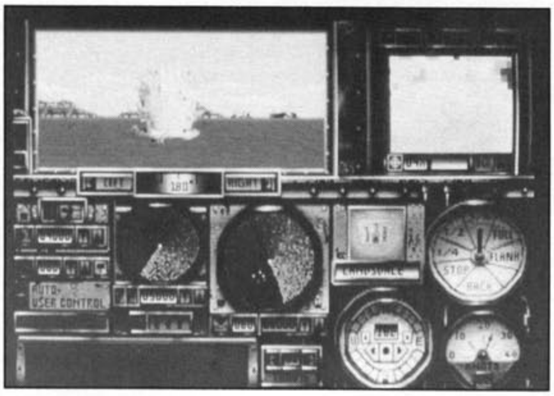
Finally, the icons used to represent the German submarines are in fact historical, although this is not mentioned in the manual. The icons represent the named vessel, but it would have been nice to see the historical background of such vessel. There was an error, in that the U-124 uses a "Green Frog" icon while this was actually Kapitanleutnant Mohr's personal insignia. The ship actually used the Edelweiss (thus, both symbols were used).

The Seaweed Is Always Greener (Graphics)

Billed as "Supporting VGA Graphics", *WolfPack* uses a full VGA color display in the opening screens. *Thereafter*, it resembles a super-EGA type standard. The graphics are well-done a la *688 Attack Sub*, but they are not of VGA quality throughout. Also, the ship sinkings and the sea itself assume a certain "chunkiness" in display terms.

The ship instrumentation is easy-to-read, although the strategic map can often become confusing. The normal instrumentation screen is easy to use, and periscope viewing can be switched 180 degrees by the touch of a button. However, fine adjustments can be harder to achieve.

Sound boards are supported, and the implementation is well-



done. The opening theme yields a proper aura of depth and foreboding. Even on the internal speaker, it sounds interesting.

Game Play

In terms of historical accuracy, at least, game play is the main failing of *WolfPack*. The packaged scenarios are ahistorical and generally start out with contact already achieved. Yet, no distinction is made between steam and electric torpedoes (and there does not seem to be a minimum range), while the surface fleet is composed of merchant shipping and a Fletcher-class destroyer. Historically, most convoys were protected by DEs (destroyer escorts) and corvettes.

Input may be made via joystick, mouse and/or keyboard. A nice touch is that often, multiple methods are available to switch from various game areas. Thus, the gamer has a choice of accessibility paths. Scoring is done via zero-sum, i.e. the victory points for destroyed ships are weighted so that each side constitutes 50%. Time compression (1-64 times normal) permits one to quickly pass over periods of non-contact, although there is a danger that too much can happen too quickly unless the player is alert.

WolfPack's game mechanics involve shifting from bridge to bridge (a la *Strike Fleet*), during which time the other vessels may continue on pre-set orders or be left to the orders of the computer AI captains (who may be relentless, resourceful, cautious or by-the-book). The best that can be said of the AIs is that they can be depended on to do the wrong thing at the wrong time (except for the by-the-book types, who never do anything). Standing orders may be given (U-Boat—Anchor, Shadow, Patrol; Destroyer—Anchor, Convoy, Patrol; Merchant Shipping—Anchor, Join Convoy, Act as Convoy Leader).

Depth Charges (Criticisms)

The two player mode uses an innovative feature where the submarine screen appears for a set period, following which the view switches to the surface player. While adequate warning time is provided, the entire play sequence did not allow this reviewer to place a consistent and coherent offensive/defensive plan in operation. Perhaps, it will take a true modem-to-modem interface to achieve the ideal in this regard.

During play, target acquisition can be made by the submarine without using the periscope. Lead is automatically computed (no angle-on-the-bow estimates for an accurate firing solution), but there is no layered-on complexity (except for time of day, with night visibility offering more limited target acquisition). Often, a target will appear in one's periscope, but the message reads "No Target". This is "an undocumented feature" (known as a bug to the general public). Fortunately, it is not fatal, since even such a target can still be sunk by torpedoes.

Beware of enemy merchant gunners. While historical merchant shipping had atrocious gunnery (the merchant marine was not known for its time engaged in target acquisition and engagement), the computer gunners are deadly accurate. Depth charges by the destroyers are generally set for the correct depth. Thus, unless one can quickly escape the surface ships and destroy them piecemeal, the scenarios usually wind up with a U-boat defeat.

The documentation notes that engaging an oncoming-escort "down-the-throat" is an effective tactic. Generally, such a maneuver is risky in the extreme—the destroyer presents its smallest target and the submarine cannot dive deeply enough to escape if it misses. Sam "Down-the-Throat" Dealey won the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Pacific using this tactic, however, his boat was also lost with all hands.

The surface commander will engage in "sprint and drift" tactics. Instrumentation is quickly understood and one can understand the frustration of the hunter-killer teams—finding, fixing and destroying an enemy submarine can be an exercise in frustration and patience. Depth charges are usually the weapon of choice, because hedgehogs have to be in very close proximity to the enemy submarine in order to effect any substantive damage.

The pre-built scenarios are generally inadequate. They involve little of the stalk, but rather involve one directly in the kill—and, too often, the kill can be on the wrong side unless one is quick! The Mission Generator is easy to use, and one can achieve more accurate scenarios. The manual warns that the greater the number of ships, the slower the processing speed of the computer. Thus, slower machines should design smaller scenarios.

Conclusions

There have been too many compromises with reality for this to constitute a "precise simulation". In terms of "look and feel", *WolfPack* is analogous to *688 Attack Sub* in that both products offered fine graphics and entertainment, but neither is accurate. In fact, *WolfPack* may be more reminiscent of a modern submarine simulation than a World War II era exercise, since one can engage targets without utilizing the periscope. *WolfPack* may actually garner some of the commercial success which attended *688 Attack Sub*. However, with the increasing number of products available for the consumer, this reviewer does not consider *WolfPack* to have any real long-term sustainability. Although *WolfPack* lacks realism as a simulation, it can still be enjoyed as a game. The sounds and the graphics can be fun, albeit ahistorical.

Recommended Reading

The documentation cites two references, although it is clear that heavy reliance was placed on Robert C. Stern's *U-Boats in Action*.

Also recommended are:

Michael Gannon, *Operation Drumbeat*, the history of the German submarine offensive against the United States in early 1942;

Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Cruel Sea*, an excellent fictionalized treatment of a British corvette during World War II;

Peter Cremer, *U-Boat Commander*, the memoirs of a German submarine captain.

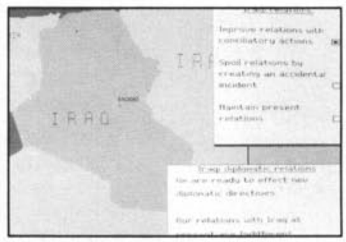
The Valley of the Shadow of *Conflict*

by Alan Emrich

Well, things haven't been going so well in the world of Conflict, the new "psychopolitical cold war" game from Virgin Mastertronic. The Israeli Prime Minister was just assassinated and guess who got his job. Oh, don't worry about the flying insults, it's the flying bombers that'll do the job. The secret is to be ready to rock when the tanks start to roll because this very Cold War is enough to make one shivah.

The objective is straightforward enough. Just get every neighboring country to collapse. Fortunately, Saudi Arabia is too rich to jeopardize itself as an imperialist stooge of the Superpowers, and is therefore "out of the game". Naturally, in the best traditions of national self interest, the ends always justify the means. Consequently, if this means rolling over Lebanon under the pretext of the invasion being "just a training exercise", then so be it.





TITLE:	Conflict
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$9.95
DESIGNER:	David Eastman
PUBLISHER:	Virgin Mastertronic Irvine, CA

Players read the headlines from the various newspapers to commence each month. Naturally, the radical Arab papers just don't see the issues quite the same way as the *Tel Aviv Times*, so the headlines not only make for some amusing reading, but reading between the lines can explain a good deal about the underlying political stances of neighboring governments. Often, however, the newspapers are white, the print is black, and the journalism is yellow.

Now, let's see. First things first. What's in the morning papers? Oh, yes, the old Prime Minister was assassinated. Like Reagan, he forgot to duck. Hmm, Iran and Iraq are warring with each other this month. Better find out what Mossad (Israeli Secret Service) has on that. Here's an interesting tidbit, a nuclear reactor is being built in Egypt. Well, not for long!

After setting down the papers (recycling some and burning others), it's off to the War Room to study the situation map. It is here that the hawks, vultures, sharks and piranha (which constitute the player's Cabinet) gather to urge you forward for Greater Israel. A simple graphic interface allows one to examine, country by country, the status of each nation, as well as its current diplomatic posture towards The Holy Land (i.e., are their armies ready to maneuver in Megiddo, or should the IDF start issuing travel brochures to Syria?).

It is here in the War Room where the player is reminded by the opposition party of the government's present international prestige. This is a barometer which is easily altered. Assert Isreal's military or political strength and woosh! (Time to call for new elections, right?—Fortunately for the player, there are no elections in Conflict, so one is blessed, or cursed, with this job until victory or death). If a player shows the slightest signs of compromise or willingness to negotiate a settlement, then zoom! (Normally, one would need to keep an eye open for a military coup d'etat, but they do not exist in Conflict, either, so one's back is always covered from internal politics. Too bad, though, because internal Israeli politics would make a great game in and of itself!).

Finally, the end of world is nigh (and the "nuclear clock" begins to strike midnight) as the ectotensions of Israel are revealed. Or, to put it another way, standing in a pool of gasoline, it can be difficult to find a place to put out one's cigarette (smoking, after all, is bad for one's health). It is at moments like this where a player must consider his options for the month.

Fortunately, Mossad raises the term "cloak and dagger" beyond a mere fashion statement. They can turn the enemy's rabble into rebels, create emergency insurgencies, do coups, and won't hesitate to assassinate. Remember, one overthrow can ruin a neighbor's whole day (and takes them out of the game permanently, just the same as a full scale military invasion might).

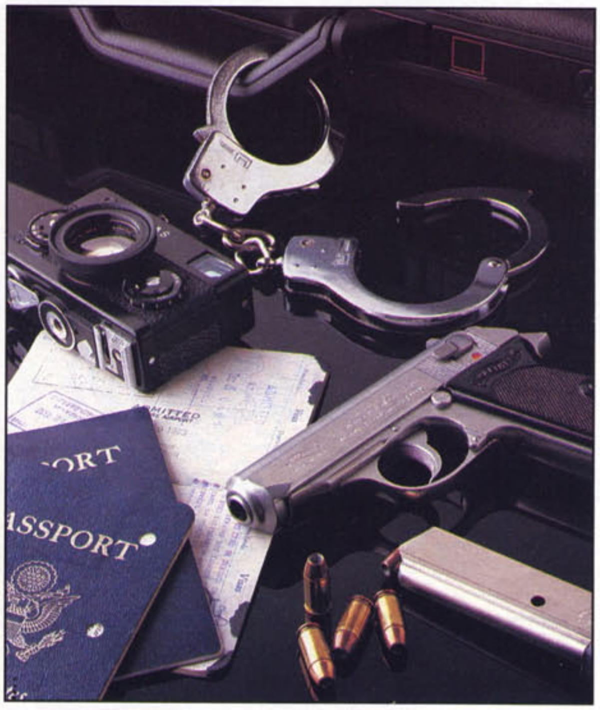
Hmm, Let's see. Egypt's getting a little uppity with that nuclear reactor. Better launch a strike on that. Just in case, let's start courting Libya in hopes of drawing Egyptian eyes westward. Lebanon is ripe, but Jordan won't sit still if the Star of David starts flying over Beirut. Syria is friendly today . . . Okay, send a brigade to the Lebanese border to heat up tensions, bomb Egypt, woo Libya and start undermining the Iranian government, just for laughs.

When the going gets tough, however, the tough go shopping. Thanks to several U.S. Grants (i.e. the face on the $50 bill), Israel has got to chips needed to buy those warlike "super-destructive" procurers of peace, arms. With one's advisors egging the player on, the player sees what is offered by the United States, Britain, France and the "independent" arms dealers this month. Of course, the selection improves from a supplier if the player proves a steady customer, but America tends to have the best overall selection (albeit at premium prices). Techno-toys include bombers, strike aircraft and helicopter gunships, surface-to-air mis-

(Continued on page 52)

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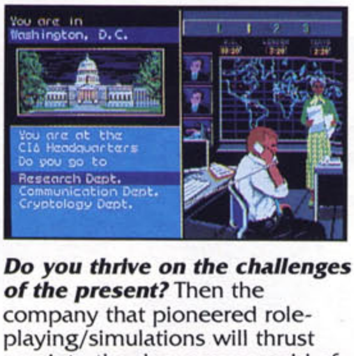


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WATERLOO

The British Take Us Back To The Battlefield

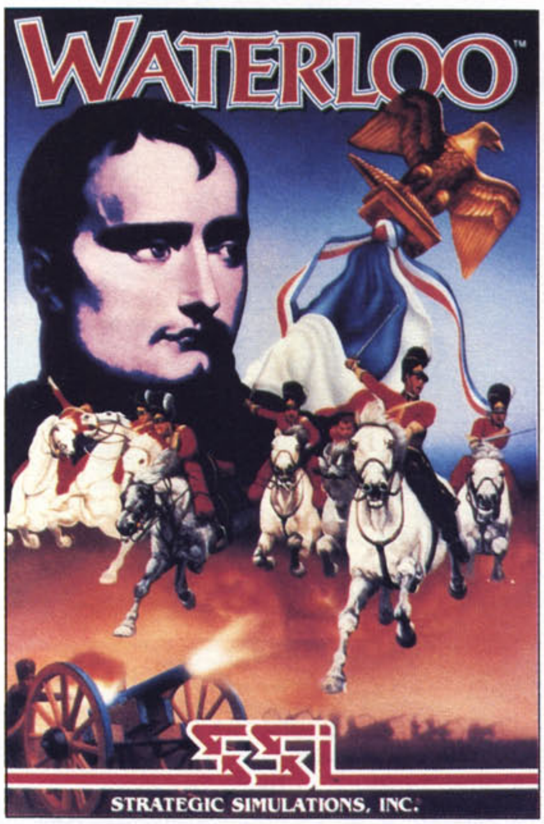
Review by M. Evan Brooks

Waterloo is a radical departure from the normal wargame genre. Covering the most famous battle in history (one whose name alone has passed into the English language as symbolic of strategic defeat), the simulation offers a perspective more akin to that of the battlefield commander than heretofore seen.

Released initially in England by **PSS**, the game has been slightly revised. Instead of seeing the entire battlefield, the player can only see what the historical commander could see (although a much appreciated option allows one to view the battlefield from other locations).

Message From The Courier, Sir (Documentation)

The documentation succinctly delineates the game mechanics. One literally types in his orders to his subordinate commanders, who *generally* attempt to carry them out. The various commands are explained and examples are provided in an appendix. While most of the orders are self-explanatory, the attack and defense line orders could have benefited from more detail as to their effect. Similarly, combat results are never explained, which often raises a question as to what happens when a subordinate commander achieves his objective (Is he able to continue on or is his offensive capability at an end?)



NAME:	WATERLOO
SYSTEM:	IBM/Atari ST/Amiga
REVIEWED:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	0-2
PRICE:	$59.95
DESIGNER:	Dr. Peter Turcan
PUBLISHER:	Strategic Simulations, Inc.

When commands are typed in, any error will be quickly displayed. Also, there is some confusion as to why certain orders are not recognized. Some orders will not be recognized at one point, only to be allowed later in time. Only repeated play will reveal these command opportunities.

The "Background and History" is well written, with this portion of the documentation giving a detailed history of Napoleonic warfare and an excellent account of the battle itself.

Line of Sight (Graphics)

The graphics of *Waterloo* are very good. Based on a ground-level perspective, one sees what was historically present from the chosen vantage point. Units are portrayed as domino-like blocks, with commanders and dispatch riders displayed somewhat less impressively as Gumby-like stick figures. However, the overall impression is still impressive. While one may question the block-like figures, anyone who has seen the movie *Waterloo* (starring Rod Steiger as a somewhat dyspeptic Napoleon) will quickly acknowledge the accuracy of the battlefield portrait.

However, *Waterloo* frequently "redraws" the battlefield. While the time lag is not overly disturbing on a fast machine, it does become burdensome on slower machines. Also, choosing the "cannon fire" option does not yield much in

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driven interface to interview one's favorite rock star; select portions of one's favorite song to isolate and listen to; or create one's own music video. No specific artists have been announced for this *PlatinumTRAX* series, but more than thirty are expected to participate over the course of the first wave of products.

Not So Revolting Development

Another way in which the four worlds have come together is in the role of European developers. Just a couple of years ago, European developers were looked upon as useful for converting the most successful programs sold in the U.S. from one format and/or market to another. No one seemed very interested in seeing European product unless it could be marketed as part of a budget line or could



NEC's TurboGrafx-CD player

fill the gaps caused by a publisher's own products slipping into a later time frame. Now, European products (particularly on disk-based format) are pushing the U.S. market and European publishers are entering the U.S. market aggressively in their own right.

In 1990, French developer **UbiSoft** not only introduced their own products (*Iron Lord*, *Pro Tennis Tour* and *Puffy's Saga*) under their own label, but have a full pipeline of potential releases in the works (*B.A.T.* - a futuristic action/adventure that offers impressive graphics, challenging puzzles and an intriguing atmosphere, *Unreal* - a strange adventure through one's subconscious dreamland which combines action and problem-solving into an interesting hybrid and the as yet unnamed Tetris-style game mentioned earlier).

In order to distribute their products aggressively in the United States, **UbiSoft** joined **Electronic Arts Distribution**. They were not the only European publisher to take this leap across the Atlantic. **Ocean**, once known primarily in the United States as the developer of many **Data East** games (the *Batman* games and *Platoon* for instance), has joined EAD in order to promote *The Untouchables* and *Nightbreed* (both based on the successful films). The company is still signed to do conversion and development work for **Data East** on the NES and former Data East executive Ray Musci is a major player in trying to bring action games like *Billy the Kid*, a one or two player action/strategy game based on the wild west, and *Lost Patrol*, described in *CGW* #72's "Over

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return. The artillery fires are brief and do not give the impressive sound and fury of a massed Napoleonic Grand Battery. Finally, there is *no* sound whatsoever in the program. While this is not a major liability, the crackling of the musketry and the deeper throated roar of the artillery would have been appreciated.

Headquarters (Game Play)

By its very nature, *Waterloo* differs from the usual wargame. One quickly learns that issuing massive sets of orders only leads to massive confusion. Like Napoleon, one must give general directives and leave the execution thereof to the subordinate commanders. Thankfully, Marshal Ney is absent. Appointed by Napoleon as the battlefield commander, Ney's performance may have been heroic from the perspective of an individual warrior, but was severely deficient as a higher commander.

Regrettably, battlefield smoke has been omitted. Given the camouflage opportunities that smoke often offered on a Napoleonic battlefield, this is a somewhat questionable call. In attempting to mask the British fires from Hougoumont, for example, a Napoleonic battery could well have offered concealment (if not cover) for Reille's II Corps to advance on La-Haiae-Saint.

Issuing commands is raised to an art form in *Waterloo*. However, care should be taken to avoid relative commands, i.e., a command to move 1/4 mile south of Hougoumont should be rephrased for the moving unit to "move 1/4 mile north (of its present position). Relative commands can be executed, but the problem is that the artificial intelligence has some problems executing relative commands *consistently*. Thus, the direct command should be executed if at all possible.

Insofar as history is concerned, there is no dispute that the Napoleon of 1815 was not the Napoleon of 1805. Despite his brilliant defensive operations in 1813-1814, the Emperor no longer possessed his physical or mental steadfastness of prior times. Many historians feel that the Napoleonic method failed because troop density/strength outgrew the capabilities of a single commander. Martin van Creveld suggests that the maximum troop strength one man can handle may well be under 100,000. At Austerlitz (1805), Napoleon handled 85,000 men well; at Jena-Auerstadt (1806), he lost control of up to one-third of his 150,000 man army (cf. COMMAND IN WAR, Cambridge, 1985, page 104). Whether the Emperor suffered from hemorrhoids, stomach cancer, syphilis or dysentery (all of which have been postulated by various historians), Napoleon's tactical expertise at Waterloo was mediocre. While strategically stealing a march on the British in order to split the British and Prussians (as Wellington said, "Bah, Napoleon has humbugged me!"), his appointment of commanders for this campaign was questionable. Recently appointed Marshal Grouchy was a good cavalry commander, but not a leader for independent command. Marshal Ney's mental adroitness had been questionable since the Russian Campaign. Marshal Davout, appointed to head the War Ministry and Paris, noted that his tenure would be superfluous if Napoleon was defeated, but his services would be of more assistance to the Field Army. Marshal Soult was appointed as Chief of Staff (since Berthier's lamentable "fall from grace" a few months earlier) and his expertise was lacking in such a sphere of responsibility.

Tactically, the British position at Waterloo was unbalanced, with the right flank being understrength. Napoleon's intended diversion at Hougoumont (which was translated by his brother into a bullheaded direct assault, which disrupted the French II Corps) followed by an assault up through La-Haiae-Saint was an acceptable maneuver, although it did not emulate the ideal Napoleonic concept of the flank attack. Still, the French Army of 1815 was less well-trained than the French Army of 1807 (due to a decade of casualties) and its tactical execution suffered.



It is interesting to note that Wellington's position revealed much more of the battlefield than Napoleon's. This was a direct function of his selection of that particular area for defense. Today, if one visits the battlefield, he will be most impressed by the virtual flatness of the terrain. The minor folds of the terrain appear minimal, yet to the trained military officer, these proved of immense significance.

Also, in 1912, the Belgian Government erected the Lion Hill, a large hill which overlooks the battlefield from the British position; the problem is that by excavating the nearby terrain to erect the hill, the entire battlefield topography was modified. Finally, this reviewer would note that much of the terrain at Waterloo seems to be composed of clay with rather large air pockets—terrain inimical to cavalry. No historian seems to have mentioned this, and possibly the terrain characteristics have been changed in the last century. If the terrain is still similar, however, then this is another explanation of why the French cavalry could only be employed at certain areas of the battlefield.

But even the historian, familiar with the actual battlefield, will often become confused in *Waterloo*. Wargaming, as most gaming grognards know, is not a true test of battlefield decision. Instead, it is a detailed historical staff study. Generally, one has more information (regarding order of battle, combat results and terrain) than any historical commander. In fact, when wargames exemplify enemy order of battle uncertainty, the basic offensive mindset of most players rapidly decreases.

"...[W]hen war games are held with all participants gathered in a comfortable room—under such conditions it is almost inevitable that the real nature of war as the most confused and confusing of all human activities will be lost sight of and command come to be regarded mainly as the regular unfolding of carefully laid plans." Martin van Creveld, COMMAND IN WAR, pp. 151-152.

Victory or Defeat? (Conclusions)

Waterloo is a radical departure from most wargaming. Its ground perspective and issuance of orders places the player in the role of the battlefield commander—with the disadvantages inherent in such position. The simulation will rapidly teach the user why commanders have difficulty in achieving battlefield success and why we compensate generals so well.

Waterloo tends, at times, to offer more substance than "entertainment". For example, one is never sure as to the status of his subordinates and one often reinforces failure rather than rewards success in the course of gameplay. The user will rapidly learn that orders, once given, are difficult to withdraw and that subordinate commanders may have a different (and indeed more accurate) understanding of their duty. To a wargamer familiar with the American "standard" (i.e. overhead hexagon-type movement), *Waterloo*'s 3-D command perspective can prove a frustrating experience or an exciting one, depending on one's perspective. Also,

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There" column, to market. Data East and Ocean are also co-licensees on *RoboCop 2*, expected to be a first quarter product in 1991.

After seeing **Bullfrog**'s (*Populous*) latest product (*Warmonger* in the U.K., *Powermonger* in the U.S.), one cannot help but wonder how long it will be before they join the ranks of full-fledged publishers. Powermonger is a real-time strategy/wargame using the familiar three-dimensional perspective of Populous. There are some significant refinements, however. The graphics are more detailed, have lost that "Lego"-style brick look, involve cascading waterfalls and provide realistic looking trees, shrubs, villages, etc. The game model includes regionalized weather which players do not control, micro-economic sequences where one sends his/her villagers out to forage for raw materials and into the workshop to "Invent" plows, weapons, vehicles, etc., which end up advancing the civilization and accelerating its growth. Up to four different player civilizations can compete simultaneously via a serial connection. The game is due to be released in the Fall.

Infogrames and **Mirrorsoft** are two other European publishers to keep one's eyes on. The former were developers of *Full Metal Planet* for Data East (as well as **Mindscape**'s *Captain Blood* and Data East's *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Priestess* and *Drakkhen*). Based on a French boardgame, Full Metal Planet is a fast-moving strategy/wargame game set in a futuristic setting. In addition to strategy and resource management, players will have to learn how to deal with the severe tidal systems which are *almost* unpredictable and upset the military balance significantly from time to time. The Atari ST version of this 1-4 player game has been extremely well-received in France and the Amiga/PC versions should be very successful in the U.S.

Mirrorsoft will have just completed *Flight of the Intruder* for **Spectrum HoloByte** by the time this report hits the stands. Based on the best-selling novel by Stephen Coonts, this A-6 Intruder/F-4 Phantom simulation will feature 16-color VGA graphics. The game will be mission-based, using "actual" encounters from Vietnam veterans. In a CES press conference, Coonts noted that many of the encounters found in the book were based on personal experiences, but most of those which were not happened to be based on the experiences of his colleagues. The product is expected to handle the rules of engagement and personalities of the pilots in an authentic manner.

Finally, Spectrum HoloByte is not the only country with development occurring behind what was once "The Iron Curtain". **California Dreams** has their programming done in Warsaw, Poland and their developers are planning to produce a game based on Eastern European politics and economics. The global community just keeps coming closer together.

VGA Standard

In order to stay ahead of the 16-bit graphics used in NEC's **TurboGrafx 16** (the graphics, not the CPU) and **Sega Genesis**, disk-based publishers are continuing to push the graphics technology. **Lucasfilm Games** has entered into a promotional agreement with **Western Digital**, makers of the *Paradise* VGA boards. Indeed, a purchaser of a Paradise VGA board in the next few months will receive a free copy of the VGA upgrade of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure*. Lucasfilm also plans to ship *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* with a VGA mode. **Access Software** is determined to push the window even further. They are preparing 8514 versions of their future games for those who can afford the circa $1,000 needed to purchase

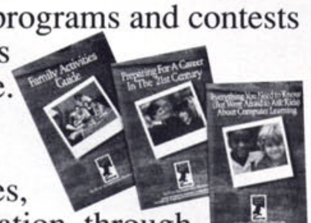


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that Paradise board (256 colors with 1024 x 768 resolution).

In the meantime, a host of other products offer VGA resolution. For example, **New World**'s *King's Bounty*, an action/strategy game with completely revamped graphics from the Apple version uses VGA resolution. Also, **Three-Sixty**'s core products for the fall line all feature 256 color palettes and VGA resolution. These include: *MegaFortress* (their "Flight of the Old Dog" game), a World War II submarine game (tentatively called *Das Boot*) and *Ace of Aces II*. It is no surprise that **Sierra**'s own label will sport graphics with superb resolution in *King's Quest V*, *Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers*, *Oil's Well* (an arcade-style oil-drilling game), and *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*. The **Dynamix** label uses 256 colors and VGA resolution in their *Red Baron*, *Stellar 7* (an updated version of their classic, science fiction arcade adventure), *Rise of the Dragon* (a point and click interactive adventure) and *Heart of China* (a point and click adventure game in a different artistic style than Rise of the Dragon) games. **Virgin Mastertronic**'s *Wonderland* makes exquisite use of both the full VGA palette and resolution. The same is true of **Origin**'s *Wingleader* and *Worlds of Ultima: Savage Empire*. Finally, **Interplay**'s exquisitely rendered *BattleChess II: Chinese Chess* and *Lord of the Rings* role-playing game both use the full 256 color palette and resolution.

Sound and Fury Signifying Something

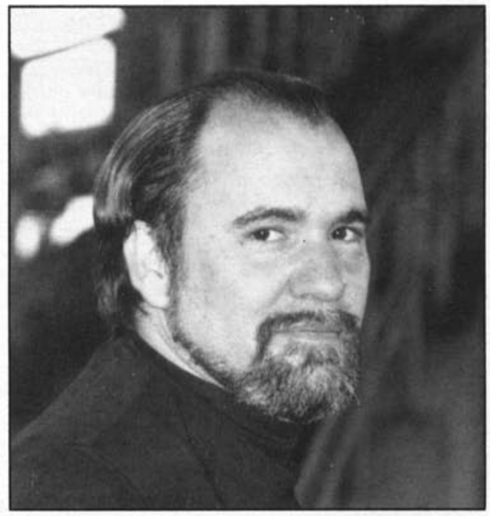
Another major step in the use of sound for computer games has just been taken. Contrary to Macbeth (and maybe William Faulkner), who felt that sound and fury had nothing to really communicate, **Origin Systems** believes that sound is very significant. Now, using a software-driven "tension meter" with branching musical phrases driven by software sequencing commands, they have unveiled *SoundTrax*. This phenomenal approach emulates the cinematic experience of having the music in the soundtrack fit the emotions of the on-screen action. *CGW* Editor-in-Chief Sipe calls this advancement in computer game soundtracks, "interfacing at a subliminal level". Both Fall releases for **Origin**, *Wingleader* (a three-dimensional, polygon-filled space action shoot-'em-up with over 60 missions of advancing difficulty and a cinematic style wrapper of dramatic cut scenes/animations) and *Savage Empire* (a classic pulp adventure story using the *Ultima VI* interface) will use the new technique in conjunction with two original soundtracks by George "The Fat Man" Sanger (*Loom* composer).

Film At Eleven

The world of computer entertainment never stands still. In many ways, the Fall products for 1990 are predominantly consolidating the technological advances of the last twelve months. In terms of game play, value, story and depth, it appears that they will surpass their immediate predecessors. One fact seems certain, four worlds of computer entertainment are converging on the adult market of computer gamers. It now seems that more of a coalescence than collision will occur, but the good news is that new relationships, understandings and creative undertakings are likely to take place.

Culturally and economically speaking, the four worlds are definitely coming together in technological interaction and interpersonal communication. Next month, *CGW*'s report on the Summer Consumer Electronics Show continues with a summary of simulations, role-playing, strategy and action games.

BEHIND THE BUDAYEEN



An Interview with George Alec Effinger

Mr. Effinger is a science fiction author who has created a fictitious universe that became the setting for Infocom's *Circuit's Edge*.

CGW: First of all, we want to ask a few questions about the books which form the background of *Circuit's Edge*. For instance, how did the books come to reflect Islamic culture?

Effinger: Actually, *When Gravity Fails* is based on the French Quarter in New Orleans, but it has been transmogrified into the Budayeen. In general, I wanted to avoid the Japanese-dominated future described by William Gibson in his books, *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, and Lucien Shepherd had already staked out Central America for his dark future, I decided that the Islamic world offered the best potential for merging a lesser known culture with an advanced future.

CGW: There is one particularly unique facet about your world in both the books and the game. We're talking about the sexual crossovers. Was there a social agenda in depicting characters with switches in sexual identity? In fact, doesn't Marid seem to prefer people who have changed their sexual identities?

Effinger: I don't know exactly how it happened, but I was trying to create a world where people could not pigeonhole others based on sexual identity. Once I had created the world, having Marid be completely heterosexual would have been cowardly. I think you'll like the third book of the series. It has kind of a soap opera between Yasmin (Marid's former lover), the widow, and Marid.

CGW: Now, to be a little more relevant to the game itself, what was your involvement with the game?

Effinger: Basically, I demanded a certain degree of control in order to be certain that the on-screen messages would appear in my style. I wrote almost all the messages that appear on the screen. In fact, I probably wrote about 75% of everything on the screen. There are only a couple of side-plots that I didn't see.

Beyond that, I provided **Westwood Associates** *[Ed: The developer used by* **Infocom** *in producing the game.]*) with a list of all the characters and places in gravity and fire and they placed them the way they wanted.

CGW: Your books have some pretty mature themes in them with plenty of sex and violence. Was there any problem in transforming your fiction into a computer game?

Effinger: Actually, references to sex and drugs *were* a problem. I wrote the sex scenes in a tasteful way, but the drug stuff had to go. **Mediagenic** didn't want any references to drugs. Personally, I don't want to be supporting drug use or anything like that, because in the books, whenever Marid uses drugs he gets punished in some way or another.

I also don't know why Mediagenic took the condoms out. I was trying to say something positive by mentioning them.

CGW: Getting into the fiction a little bit, if you could have the kind of "moddie" (a personality modification chip which plugs into the brain and enables one to take on the personality characteristics of either a real or fictitious character) you describe in the book, what moddie would you most like to use?

Effinger: Lou Gehrig, probably, I'm the biggest baseball fan in the world. Of course, it would be great to experience Bob Feller. I'm a long-time Cleveland Indians fan.

CGW: We understand. Some of us like the Chicago Cubs. Getting back to the game, though, we wonder about the amount of violence in your books, as well as the game. For example, your short story, "No Prisoners", seems to justify war as an instrument of social policy.

Effinger: I'm actually anti-war in my philosophy, just on this side of being a pacifist. With regard to "No Prisoners", I believe that war can be like surgery in a World War II setting with clear-cut villains. However, if you were born in an Islamic country, war would be understood differently. Frankly, I think one of the reasons we have difficulty in dealing with Islamic countries is because we know as little about them as we did about the Vietnamese. We don't know what is important to them and we are ignorant of what motivates them, even trying to convert them by force.

CGW: Do you think that the study of Islam in preparation for writing the books and the game has changed you yourself in any way?

Effinger: Well, Islam has, basically, five pillars that the devout follower tries to keep: testify to one god with Mohammed as his prophet, pray five times a day, make pilgrimage to Mecca, keep Ramadan and give to the poor. That last pillar has probably changed my attitude the most. I've learned to be more generous. Did you know that there are documented tales of one beggar passing another on the way home and giving his alms to the other?

CGW: No, but we were impressed with how Marid learned to be more generous in *A Fire in the Sun*.

Effinger: In fact, Marid is almost completely autobiographical. Many of the gorier things in "Gravity" were actually witnessed by me at one time or another. I have sort of a fascination with the way things are in the lower rungs of society. In fact, I've probably done a lot of foolish things, but I've got a writer's curiosity about

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On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 8, please rate the following games (if you have played them) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A = Excellent
B = Above Average
C = Average
D = Below Average
F = Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

1 = Under 14 years old
2 = 14-17 years old
3 = 18-20 years old
4 = 21-30 years old
5 = 31-35 years old
6 = 36-40 years old
7 = 41-50 years old
8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on? (List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in decending order of use).

1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
2 = Amiga
3 = Apple 8 bit
4 = Apple IIgs
5 = Atari ST
6 = Atari 8 bit
7 = C-64/128
8 = Macintosh
9 = Other (specify)

3. Which of the following cartridge-based entertainment systems do you own or plan to buy in the next 12 months? (List all that apply)

1 = Nintendo Entertainment System
2 = Sega Genesis
3 = Sega Master System
4 = NEC TurboGrafx 16
5 = Nintendo Game Boy
6 = Atari Lynx

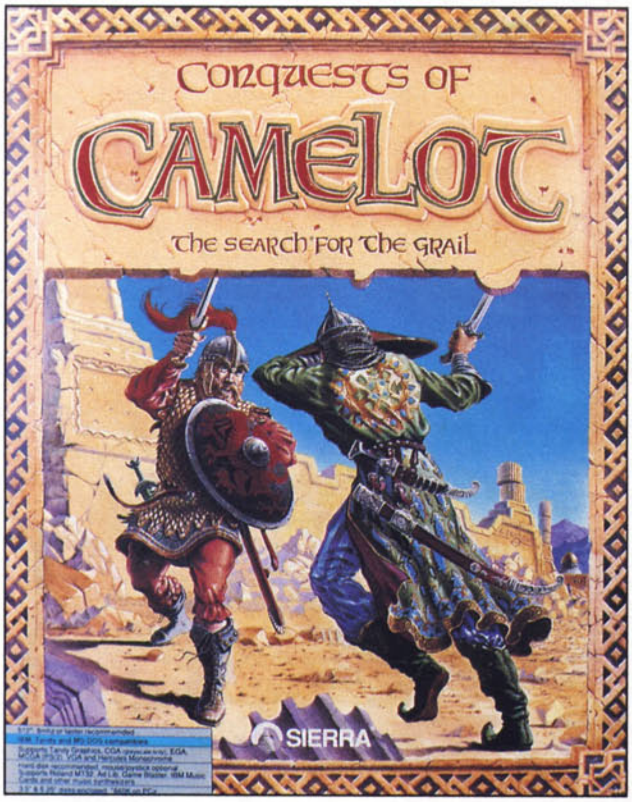
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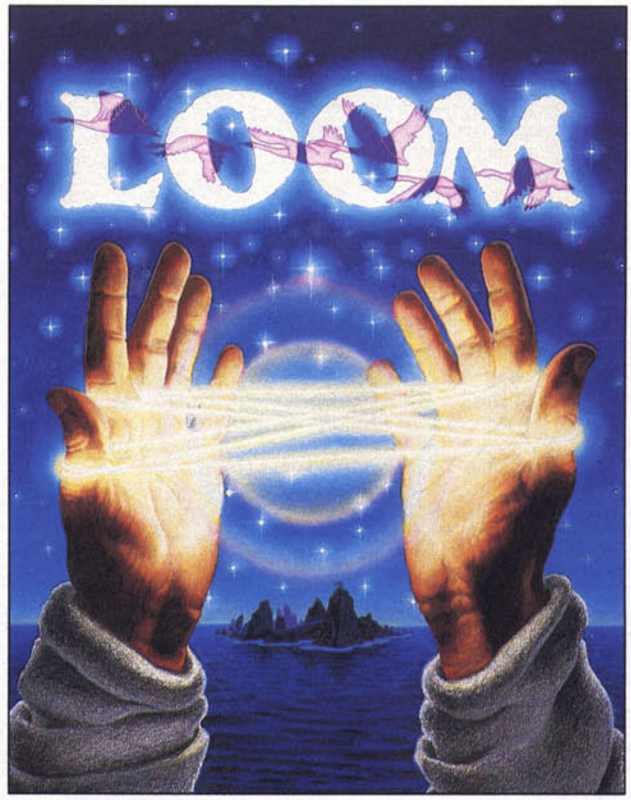
Games

4. Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
5. F-19 Stealth Fighter (MicroProse)
6. Sim City (Maxis)
7. M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse)
8. Harpoon (Three-Sixty)
9. Populous (Electronic Arts)
10. Starflight 2 (Electronic Arts)
11. Lords of Rising Sun (Cinemaware)
12. Red Storm Rising (MicroProse)
13. TV Sports Basketball (Cinemaware)
14. Action Stations (Conflict Analytics)
15. Circuit's Edge (Infocom)
16. Conquests of Camelot (Sierra)
17. Panzer Battles (SSG)
18. Nuclear War (New World)
19. Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon (MicroProse)
20. Sword of Aragon (SSI)
21. MegaTraveller 1 (Paragon)
22. Earthrise (Interstel)
23. Chamb. Sci-Mutant Priestess (Data East)
24. Escape From Hell (EA)
25. F-15 Strike Eagle II (MicroProse)
26. TANK (Spectrum Holobyte)
27. Genghis Khan (Koei)
28. Indianapolis 500 (EA)
29. Drakkhen (Data East)
30. Rings of Medusa (Star Games)
31. Full Count Baseball (Haffner)
32. Shark Attack: Greg Norman Golf (Virgin Mastertronic)
33. Fire Brigade (Panther Games)
34. X-Men: Madness In Murderworld (Paragon)
35. Malta Storm (SimCan)
36. Gold of the Americas (SSG)
37. Task Force (Fanfare)
38. Champions of Krynn (SSI)
39. Future Wars (Interplay)
40. Nobunaga's Ambition (Koei)

Articles

41. Circuit's Edge Hints
42. Effinger Interview
43. CES Report
44. Second Front Strategy
45. Railroad Tycoon Strategy
46. Waterloo Review
47. WolfPack Review
48. Opinion on Camelot and Loom
49. Chamber of Sci-Mutant Priestess Review
50. Conflict Review





Scorpion's View

"Conquests of Camelot" and "Loom"

Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and, sometimes, controversial perspective.

This time around, as I gaze into my crystal ball, two images form in the glass. No, this isn't double vision; it just means that the column covers two games instead of the usual one.

The Latest Defender of Camelot

Conquests of Camelot is **Sierra**'s latest adventure game, set during the reign of King Arthur, and focuses on the search for the Holy Grail. It takes a few liberties with Arthurian and Grail legends, but unless you're a scholar of these subjects, it won't matter very much.

Three of the best Knights of the Roundtable—Lancelot, Gawain, and Galahad—have gone off in search of the Grail. None have returned, and time is running out. The healing and restorative powers of the Grail are sorely needed in England, which is currently in bad shape and getting worse. Thus, King Arthur decides to seek the Grail himself.

Except in the matter of travelling around Britain (which is done by choosing a specific point on a full-screen map, reminiscent in some ways of *Manhunter*-style travel), this is your typical graphic-with-parser Sierra adventure. The graphics, however, are rather sub-standard for a Sierra game. In EGA mode, they are somewhat grainy, with large pixels that reminded me of nothing so much as tapioca pudding. After the beautiful look of King's Quest IV and, especially, Hero's Quest I, this is a letdown for anyone expecting pretty pictures.

Arcade-game haters will be saddened to learn that there are several action sequences in the game, including killing off a few wild boars, jousting with the Black Knight, and an elaborate sword fight with a Saracen near the end. Of course, since knights were famed above all else for their fighting prowess, these sequences should not be entirely unexpected. Be grateful there weren't more of them.

Fortunately, for those who prefer getting past such things quickly, there is an arcade setting that allows you to choose difficulty levels for these events. I definitely recommend "Easy" if you aren't thrilled by arcade combat in adventure games.

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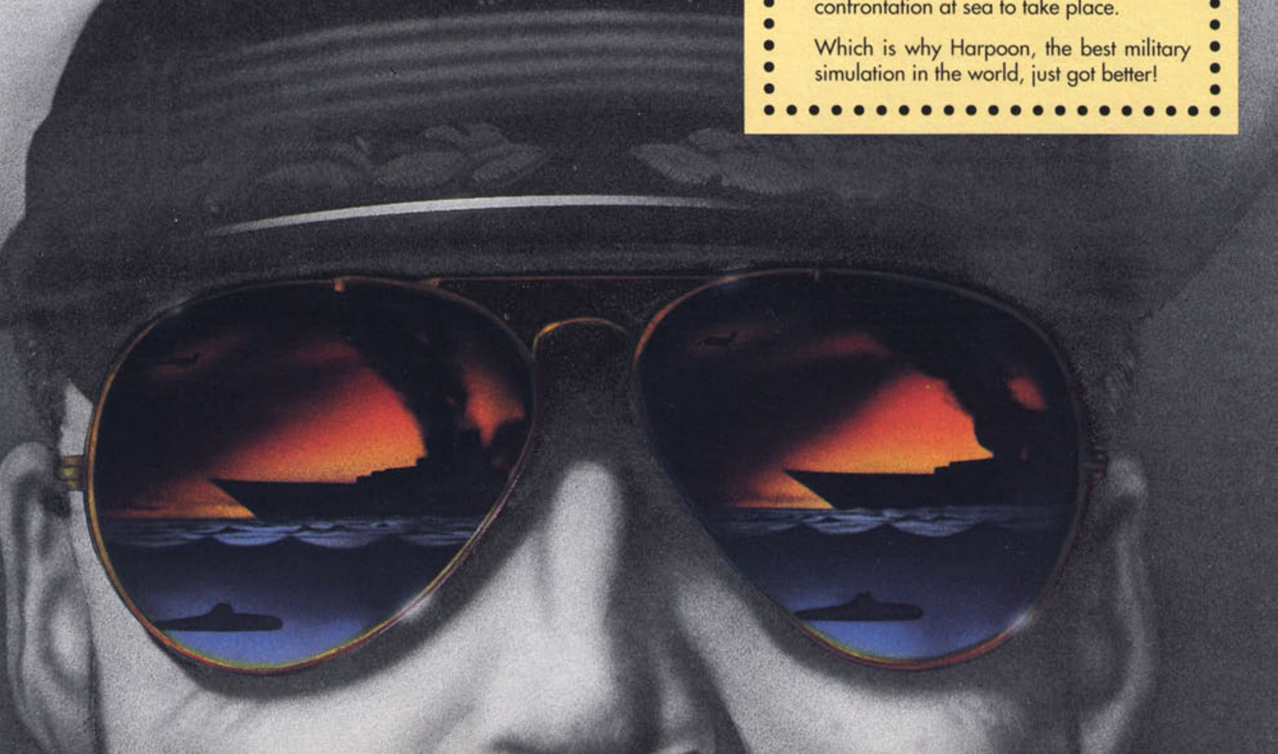
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THREE-SIXTY

(Continued from page 48)

Unfortunately, there isn't much you can do about the frozen lake. Here, you must tip-toe across four screens' worth of thin ice, and fast response is necessary to keep Arthur from plunging through to a wet and frigid death. A certain object (when activated) will help a little bit, but it is still a tedious and frustrating experience. "Save often, save Arthur" should be your motto while crossing the lake.

There is also a rather mercenary aspect to the game. Almost everyone, be they human, god, or spirit, seems to have a hand out for money. Arthur will definitely need a full purse for his travels both in England and abroad.

The game begins with Arthur standing on a stylized floor plan of his castle. From there, he can move around quickly to different rooms, enter them to talk to people, pick up items and equipment, etc. It's a great time-saver, especially as you don't have to enter every room (and Merlin will tell you so).

Speaking of Merlin, you not only have to talk to him, there is an object of critical importance in his room that you absolutely *must* get. It is not used until almost the very end of the game, when you're in the catacombs, but without it, you cannot finish.

This comes under the heading of what I call "Dirty Tricks". You need this item, and there is no way to get it, except by restoring the game, possibly pretty far back. Then, of course, you're stuck with having to replay from that point on, perhaps through a substantial part of the adventure. And, if you should happen *not* to have any saves from the England part of the game . . . you would have to replay the whole thing. So, make certain you leave Camelot with a lodestone in your pocket.

After Arthur has talked to everyone, and picked up everything he needs, it's time to for him to start out on his journeys. Essentially, he is following the paths taken by his three knights, one at a time, his first stop being Glastonbury Tor.

This is reached through the Forest Perilous, where Arthur will encounter the above-mentioned boars and Black Knight, among other things. There are really no puzzles here except figuring out what the hag wants, and answering the conundrums posed by the riddle stones guarding the entry to the Tor.

There are five stones, and each asks a riddle taken at random from a pool of twenty-five. All five must be answered correctly before you can pass. There are no separate clues or hints to the solutions; you just have to figure them out on your own. For most, this will probably be the hardest part of the game, so save after you do the hag. If one or more riddles prove too tough, restore to that point and try again. Eventually, you should get five riddles you can answer.

At the Tor, Arthur must deal with the Mad Monk, and then find a way of breaking the spell that keeps him trapped in the ruins. Neither of these is especially difficult to accomplish, particularly if you keep that strange altar in mind.

From the Tor, Arthur visits the Lady of The Lake (the same lake that is now frozen over), where he must pass a test of Flower Language in order to save both himself and Lancelot. This test is extremely easy, since all the answers are in the game manual (indeed, there are a number of tests that require having the docs, so keep them handy!).

Conversions Received

Aquanaut (Miles Computing) Atari ST
Centauri Alliance (Broderbund) C64
Champions of Krynn (SSI) Amiga
Decisive Battles of American Civil War (SSG) IBM
European Challenge (Accolade) C64
F/16 Combat Pilot (EA) C64
Fire King (SSG) IBM
Gold of the Americas (SSG) Atari ST
HardBall II (Accolade) Amiga
Heat Wave (Accolade) Amiga
Hero's Quest (Sierra) Amiga
Jack Nicklaus Championship Courses 1989 (Accolade) Mac
Jack Nicklaus Greatest 18 Holes (Accolade) Mac
Jack Nicklaus International Course Disk (Accolade) Mac
Manhunter 2: San Francisco (Sierra) Amiga
Out Run (Sega) Amiga
Panzer Battles (SSG) Mac
Sword of Aragon (SSI) Amiga
Their Finest Hour (LucasFilm) Amiga

Finally, Arthur sets out on the third path, leading to the middle east, and eventually, the Grail. He should certainly talk to Al-Sirat before going on through the desert to Jerusalem. The desert, by the way, is tricky. If you don't find the correct path through, you will wander, probably forever, among the dunes. On the other hand, the true way passes through no more than three screens from the pool. Keep that in mind.

In Jerusalem, Arthur has plenty to do before he can reach the Grail (this is the most active part of the game). However, while he will be busy, none of his tasks are particularly hard. All that's involved is a little thought, some money, and a fair amount of running back and forth. There are also two more tests (sometimes, I felt like I was back in school, with all these tests to pass), after which Arthur can move on to the catacombs.

These, again, present little difficulty for the most part. Everything needed to solve the puzzles (such as they are) is close at hand. All you have to do is be careful on your way out.

Once out of the catacombs, it is wise to save the game right there, as the battle with the Saracen is imminent. He is not in that screen, but close enough, and you'll happen on him sooner or later (probably sooner). This fight is more realistic than any others in the game, so be sure you're familiar with the necessary keys. There is no way to practice beforehand, either; you just have to go in and do your best.

After the combat, Arthur faces one more puzzle/riddle, the solution of which will lead him to the hiding place of the Grail. The riddle may sound confusing, but if you keep in mind that a left-hand spiral goes counterclockwise, it's really simple.

In fact, the whole game is rather simple. Except for some of the riddles at the riddle stones, crossing the frozen lake, and the action sequences, there's nothing in the game to slow down the experienced adventurer. Arthur must do other things besides solving painfully obvious puzzles to prove himself worthy of the Grail, but the correct actions are equally evident: Arthur need only behave as your typical Ultima IV Avatar in all situations.

Judging by the manual (which is nicely done) a fair amount of historical research was done in preparation for Camelot. Most of it, however, seems to have been used more for copy protection than anything else. There were only three instances in the game where I felt the "historical flavor" come through: the joust with the Black Knight, in the bazaar in Jerusalem, and standing among the ruins of Aphrodite's temple.

Essentially then, Camelot is a game more for the beginning adventure gamer, rather than the experienced one. Those who prefer adventures requiring some heavy mental effort will probably want to skip this one.

Loom Entombed

Loom is even more of a beginner's game (*Camelot* seems almost hard by comparison). Rigidly structured and totally linear, *Loom* is designed on the "no loss" principle: there is no way to progress until you have done everything necessary for the next step.

In one sense, this is good, as it prevents a common problem in games

(Continued on page 63)

Valley of Conflict

(continued from page 38)

siles plus light and heavy tanks. Like many other controlled substances, one simply cannot get enough (the "doves" who play this game will probably start a "Just say no to Helicopter Gunships" campaign). Fortunately, the French don't seem to care too much about who they sell to, so you can always run up a debit with them and buy in lower quantities than from the other dealers.

Well, now. Let's order some heavy tanks from the US, a Nimrod spyplane from Britain, and some Mirage Fighters from France. Full price? You want us to pay full price?! Look, buddy, we gotta haggle . . .

A good recipe for winning Conflict, however, requires stirring the pot. One cannot let sleeping camels lie. Instead, one must get on the hump and make them flea because a single hair's brush from a hostile Arab neighbor could be one's doom. Fortunately, picking fights is much easier than picking horses, and tensions can always be artificially raised by a few surgical air strikes in the enemy's heartland or the sudden, unexplained mobilization on the enemy border ("Who? Those guys? Oh, they're just the border fruit inspectors. You know, those Mediterranean fruit flies? No need to worry about them, Mr. Ambassador.").

Soon the tension level rises and the troops start to tango. The trick here is not to let things get too tense, or those United Nations "do-gooders" might intercede and blow the whole war by sticking a peacekeeping force in the middle of it. Worse yet, a wimpy faction of liberal U.S. Senators might start an arms embargo! (How is one supposed to test their new weapons systems for them if they don't supply them?).

Dealing with the Palestinian homeland problem, keeping tensions in the region manageable, picking "winnable" fights and developing Israel's nuclear capability are all part of the tightrope act at which a player must become proficient. Did someone say nukes? Of course, everything is publicly denied, but when a nuclear reactor appears in a neighboring country, one must be quick to scramble the strikefighters, because Israel will either be a sole nuclear power or a large, Arab parking lot. The trouble is, that your strikefighters have too short a range to hit non-adjacent countries, so when Iraq, Iran and Libya start developing nukes, the end is pretty well nigh. (Naturally, Dr. Strangelove is still making Superpower policy, so one little nuclear matchstick going off in the Middle East destroys the entire planet. Sheeze! Those guys have no sense of humor!).

Here is one final word of advice, Mr. Prime Minister. "Your arm's too short to box with Egypt." Change the word Sinai to Waterloo and one gets a good idea as to what's in store for a premature bout with Pharaoh. The player must keep his Red Sea pedestrians safe behind the correct side of the Don't Walk sign (either that or start taking pyramid building lessons again).

Conflict is not striving to be a realistic simulation. It is meant to be an amusing exercise in cold war politics set in a futuristic Middle East environment. It is fast-playing, easy to learn, entertaining and not to be taken too seriously. Besides, for less than ten dollars ($9.95), it's such a deal!

Continued from page 42

one is never sure as to how, when and where combat units have been committed; combat results are not revealed, and it is difficult to determine when the vagaries of combat have contributed to a combat failure rather than the failure of command itself.

However, this reviewer maintains that a wargame of this genre be considered mandatory for the serious user. Having written his Command & General Staff College treatise on Napoleon's mistakes at Waterloo, having personally traversed the battlefield, and having played over ten (10) separate Waterloo simulations, this reviewer found *Waterloo* to give a more accurate rendition of the challenges facing the respective commanders. Victory is not readily achievable, confusion is rampant. Still, the historian will learn much from this product. Hopefully, the "next generation" of this genre will offer an optional "eagle-eye" (or traditional) view, so that gamers could learn the actual effect of their orders and profit from their errors; as the user grows to understand the military ramifications of his orders and the success ratio, his reliance on this crutch will diminish.

RECOMMENDED READING

For a product with such an extensive "Background and History" section, the lack of a bibliography is surprising. This reviewer would suggest the following:

Chalfont, Lord, ed., WATERLOO (New York, 1980): A superb history of the Battle, written by three authors (English, French, Prussian). This book includes a tour of the battlefield site, Waterloo in literature, a detailed order of battle, pictures of the battlefield (then and now) and the French orders and dispatches. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Chandler, David G., THE CAMPAIGNS OF NAPOLEON (New York, 1966): THE classic Napoleonic reference.

Esposito, Vincent J. and J.R. Elting, A MILITARY HISTORY AND ATLAS OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS (New York, 1968): An essential reference for anyone having a deep interest in the period.

Howarth, David, WATERLOO: Day of Battle (New York, 1968): A popular and well-written history of the Battle, although geared for the generalist.

Keegan, John, THE FACE OF BATTLE (New York, 1976): A military classic, involving studies of the Battles of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme from the viewpoint of the individual.

Lachouque, Comandant Henry, WATERLOO (London, 1972): A lavishly-illustrated treatment of the Battle.

Quimby, R.S., THE BACKGROUND OF NAPOLEONIC WARFARE (New York, 1957): Sadly out of print, this text is a detailed analysis of the genesis of the Napoleonic method.

Seymour, William, YOURS TO REASON WHY (New York, 1982): A treatise on numerous battles, with the reader being able to choose a different course of action at the critical points, and the author explaining the ramifications of the different courses of action.

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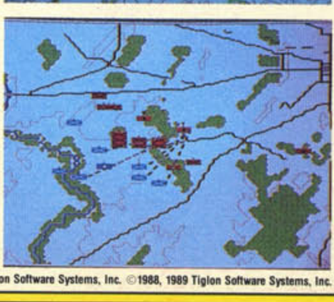
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A Second Look

(continued from Page 30)

Sound Gaming Strategy And Tactics

At the beginning of the game, feel free to strip units out of your supreme Headquarters unit. These "at start reserves" should be assigned as needed.

Leadership is vital to prevent the shattering of troops under adverse conditions and to transfer reserve divisions (on a Leader Value vs. D-10 roll) and add readiness to units (up to a maximum of 25% increase per unit on a Leader Value squared vs. D-100 roll) at the critical moment of combat. Consequently, players will find a great benefit to sending divisions back to their Army HQs. Therefore, make sure that the best Leaders are serving on the front lines at all times.

The Germans should also rotate troops and planes with their Fronts (Western and Italian). In this way, the "rested" troops from those sectors can serve to shore up the lines on the Eastern Front, while the shattered troops from the East can recover and regain experience and equipment while "resting" in the West.

When attacking, always look for overextended enemies in bad supply situations for targets. These units are far more vulnerable to losses since they will have a tendency to shatter or surrender if forced to retreat.

A good way to do this is to make small pockets with armor on the first three to four movement plots and, with the pockets closed and the enemies surrounded, assault on the last plotted moves. Smaller pockets tend to work better than larger ones because it is easier for the attacker to maintain supply integrity (and not leave his armor overextended, isolated and vulnerable to counterattack).

Another good way for the attacker to keep his losses down is to concentrate armor and launch a coordinated attack en masse against a single enemy unit. This will reduce tank losses since AT Fire casualties are determined independent of the number of attacking tanks. (Thus, 10 Anti-Tank guns would kill the same number of tanks, whether 50 were attacking them, or 5,000). This is what the Germans called "schwerpunkt" or "spearpoint" tactics. Note that corps with a lot of bombardment fire power (artillery and bombers) will reduced enemy anti-tank guns before they have a chance to fire at all due to the sequence of combat.

Weaseling Advice To Exploit The Programming

The German player should send cheap fighters and tanks to his two Front Headquarters. When calculating the formula against the Western Allies, the computer considers tanks and planes as digits in its formula, regardless of their combat factors or cost to build. Thus, one's older units should be rotated to the West, or replacement pool substitutions can be made manually by the player. In either case, keep an eye on the troops stationed there because the computer has a tendency to upgrade them on its own!

For the Germans, you can try the old "Out of Africa" technique. Pull all the troops out of Africa, let it surrender, and then replace them all again in Italy. In this way, they will not all be lost when PanzerArmee Afrika surrenders (by evacuating them, they live to fight another day). Try to time this maneuver carefully!

About The Authors

Alan Emrich is a 17 year wargaming veteran and has worked on projects for most of the major board wargaming companies. Currently assistant editor of *CGW*, he has been a game reviewer and analyst for the past 15 years.

Tom Hughes, a wargamer for 23 years, is a programmer/analyst working with Cray Supercomputers. Tom knows his way around the types of formulas and routines which make up the "working innards" of *Second Front*.

Scorpion's Tale

(Continued from page 22)

It looks like somebody just kidnapped Abdul-Hassan and wants a pile of kiam for his return. That midnight deadline is a real DEADline, and the boy will certainly be killed unless he's found in time.

Ah, poor Marid. He's done so much, yet he seems farther than ever from that elusive notebook. Every time he turns around, something else happens. Hey, at least it's an interesting life.

Anyway, time to track down Abdul. The ransom note is a good place to start. Interesting scent it has. Of course, Marid doesn't know much about such things, but there could be a place or two where he might learn more.

After a little breaking and entering, then, before long, Marid gets a call. The suspect only left a phone number. Why not call it? Maybe it's not what you're expecting, but going there and asking a few questions can't hurt.

Following up on this lead nets Marid the advice that he has to come "very close to death". Gee, hasn't he been there since almost the start of the game? Well, in this instance, you want a *place*, not a condition. There're only two places that fit the bill; if one doesn't pan out, try the other.

Hah! Nasty fight, although the guy got away before you could finish him off. Fortunately, he left a clue behind. This is pretty easy, especially if you have the right item from Electroniques. Still, blowing off the door may take a little skill (and something that goes "boom!"). Has Marid been showing things around?

After a quick dash around the Budayeen to buy a few needed items, the door is history, and so is the kidnapper (okay, so you have to fight him again; this time he won't get away). Abdul is rescued, and you get a couple of things from a grateful Muhammad. Now what?

Well, you never were able to track down Tamara, right? Moved, no forwarding address, and all that? Although, if you played the holo and talked to the landlord, you should know pretty well what it was that Tamara had in mind to do. And there's only one place in the Budayeen for to do *that*.

However, Marid will have to run one more errand before he gets the information he wants. Luckily, this is pretty simple, and there are no bodies to worry about (for a change). Just a few questions on the street, and a certain purchase (did you read the description of the jewelry carefully?), and at last, Marid gets to talk to the very elusive Tamara.

As they say, "It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings", and the fat lady hasn't even opened her mouth yet! Once again, Marid has to wait for a phone call telling him where to go (heh). When he gets there, he finds. . . *a note*. Surprise! (You were expecting another body, right).? Well, if you don't go where the note directs you, there just might be another one.

Finally, Marid is face to face with the perpetrator of these outrageous murders. In the time-honored fashion of all villains at these penultimate moments, he gloats over his victory, and adds

(Continued on page 62)

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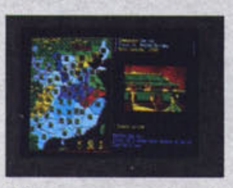
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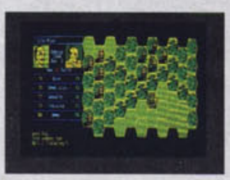
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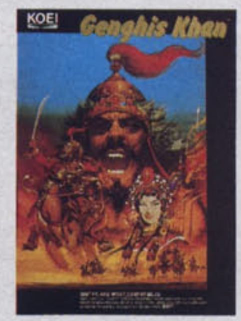
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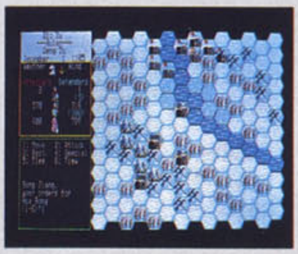


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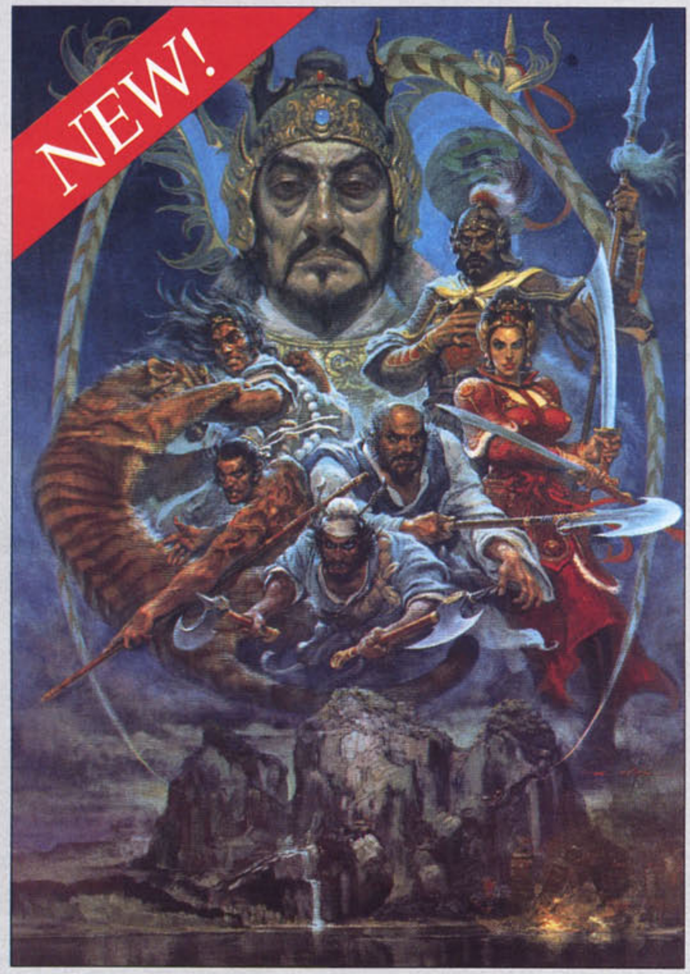








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Scorpion's Tale

(Continued from page 58)

a little more information for Marid's benefit. He then goes on to explain, in disgusting detail, exactly what he plans to do to the helpless Tamara, who is tied to a torture machine.

There is only one thing to do, which is to kill this despicable person, so don't waste any time about it (why do you think you were given the gun?). However, before he dies, he starts his infernal machine. Boy Marid, I sure hope you have the black key, because there isn't much time to free Tamara. If you don't have it, you better move fast to get it.

Whew! Tamara is saved, the notebook (at last!) is found, and Marid is Papa's fair-haired boy, at least for the moment. Take a little rest, Marid, you've certainly earned it (and you'll want to get your strength up for the promised sequel).

Well, I see by the old invisible clock on the wall that it's that time again. If you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Stop by the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On Genie: Visit the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (remember to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338 Gracie Station, New York NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!

BUDAYEEN

(Continued from page 46)

the lower depths of society. The main story in "Gravity" was based on a transvestite dancer I knew that was murdered. The police in the real city didn't do anything about the crime. They didn't care about those people and felt like they had gotten what was coming to them. The ending, by the way, was true.

CGW: So, you transformed the story and set it in the Budayeen? Are there other times you've drawn from real life?

Effinger: Well, "Fire" is based on another true story. Paul Jaworski is the name of the man who really killed my grandfather. In 1928, my grandfather was killed in the line of duty. He was always a big hero in my family and is still honored in a station house in Cleveland.

CGW: How was working on the game compared to writing science fiction novels?

Effinger: Actually, I found working on the game much tougher than I thought it was going to be. I was very proud when Infocom asked me to work on the project and it was more work than I thought it was going to be. Working with the Westwood people and the Infocom people, has been a real pleasure. The parts of the game I've played, I've enjoyed very much.





Scorpion's View

(Continued from page 51)

of this type: arriving at the end only to find you lack a critical item from earlier in the adventure (note *Camelot* above on this point). This is always a terrible moment in a linear game, as you have no way of going back and are usually forced to restore and replay from a much earlier position.

Loom does away with this, but at a very high price: an almost complete lack of freedom of movement. The game is set up as a series of locales, each containing only a few screens. You can't move from one locale to another until the puzzles are solved. If, for some reason, you are stymied by one, you are stuck in that location until you figure it out. You can't drop it for the time being and go do something else.

For that reason, the majority of puzzles (or possibly situations is a more accurate description) are on a very basic level. Bobbin Threadbare, the hero, has practically no inventory beyond his magic drafts (i.e. tunes), so in most cases it is only a matter of figuring out which tunes in his repertoire are necessary to pass an obstacle. As the number of these songs is limited, it generally takes little time to discern the correct melody.

There is only one instance in the game that might give anyone trouble, and that occurs in the city of glass. In one room, Bobbin must be invisible, but he can't play the necessary draft before entering. The solution to this is not obvious, nor is it very logical, since the song needs to be played on a *place*, not himself.

The storyline of the game is excellent, yet I can't help thinking that the marvelous concepts of the Weavers, the Loom, and the magical drafts should have been given an epic treatment, not watered down to fit a game as simple as this one. The end of the game hints at a sequel; if there is one, perhaps it will be more developed and more challenging.

Loom was designed to be non-frustrating, to have no dead ends, and be capable of completion by anyone. That goal has, without question, been achieved. The veriest novice at adventure games will have little trouble in finishing it.

Expert players will whiz right through, although they may need to exercise a bit of care: so many solutions are so obvious, they can be overlooked for that very reason.

This all sounds as though I didn't like it. Well, I was certainly disappointed at how easy the game was. Even though I knew it wasn't going to be on the same level as *Beyond Zork* (done by the same author), I did expect something a little tougher. On the other hand, aside from that one instance in the glass city, the game is put together well, and everything fits in very smoothly with the story line. So I liked it for its construction and concepts (yes, and the graphics!), but as an adventure game, it is just too lightweight.

Well, the crystal has clouded over for another month. Hopefully, we will have something a little meatier to view next time. Until then, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338 Gracie Station New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!

Tycoon "Tooter"

(Continued from page 24)

ing the location and facing of each station.

Central Planning

Another equally vital decision is where to place one's initial station. This must be the one which will be closest to the center of the envisioned sprawling railroad empire. The reason for this is one's initial station always includes an Engine Shop (with its inherent $100,000 cost). All new locomotives will be built at this location (unless the player cares to shell out those big bucks again to create another Engine Shop, which is probably not likely during the critical early years of game play), therefore, the more centrally located it is, the quicker new locomotives will be able to service new routes on the line's extremities. Also, this Engine Shop doubles as a Maintenance Shop, so every train pulling in or blowing its whistle through this initial station has its maintenance costs for the two-year fiscal period reduced by 75% (a savings which is often considerable).



Leaving The Station

There is much to know once the first trains start to run; dispatching as an art form, avoiding having one's throat slit by the competition, bleeding red ink, bankruptcy and how to wage "total war" in a rate war are all subjects for a future article. In the mean time, though, here is one last tip. When starting a train for passenger service on a new route, just put one car on it for its first run and have that baby move as fast as its mutli-tubular boilers and forced air compression can haul it. In this way, the chances of setting a speed record are vastly improved, and the train will earn a "name" for itself. Named trains, remember, generate an additional 25% bonus for passenger cargoes, so try to get every passenger train you run to earn a name for itself.

Until the whistle blows again, keep on highballing!

Peek

(Continued from page 6)

command word typing will keep the adventure gamer literate for a long time to come. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

Konami, Inc.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510

BLADES OF STEEL: The tremendously successful Nintendo game has arrived in a disk-based format that is both more colorful and faster-paced than the original. "Blades of Steel" is an action game with the emphasis on action. Rather than simply presenting cinematic insets of fighting and penalty shots, "Blades" lets the players control the fighting (and the loser gets a 30 second penalty) and either the shooter or goalie during a penalty shot. The colors are not NHL standard and statistics do not factor in, but the play value is definitely there for joystick jockeys. Amiga ($44.95), C-64/128 ($29.95), IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

CASTLEVANIA: The arcade maze game meets Dracula. This hard-to-find Nintendo hit has been beautifully converted to the disk-based format. The player grinds through the castle, zapping a variety of vicious vampire vermin right out of the Hollywood horror hopper. Naturally, there are handy implements of destruction to pick up along the way. Pure action gamers may feel that the somewhat slow pace is taking a bite out of them, but it's a popular game nonetheless. Amiga ($44.95), C-64/128 ($29.95), IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030

SID MEIER'S RAILROAD TYCOON: With four maps to build upon, 100 years to do it in, and three vicious competitors breathing down the player's neck, the gang from Microprose has really outdone themselves with this one. Some have called it "the SimCity of railroading", but its effects speak better than any made up subtitle. Role-players and joystick jockeys, wargamers and Nintendo buffs have all dropped their other games to pull all nighters playing "Railroad Tycoon". This game is on track and building up steam. When it pulls into your town, get aboard. IBM ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #7.



Keys to Maramon



Dragonstrike



Shark Attack



Mega Pack

Mindcraft Software, Inc.
2341 205th Street #102
Torrance, CA 90501

THE KEYS TO MARAMON: Not as involved or epic in scope such that a major lifetime commitment must be made to finish it (like many RPGs of similar price), "Keys to Maramon" has all of the classic RPG elements and has a quick to learn, easy to play format with a solid story line and plenty of action. One's single character must save the island city by exploring both city and dungeons. Very solid. C-64/128 ($39.95), IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
675 Almanor Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

DRAGONSTRIKE: (not pictured) As described in CGW #71's Sneak Preview, this is a dragon flight/combat simulator that combines the feel of the Dragonriders of Pern with the ease of game play and depth of role-playing universes one associates with TSR. It offers a hot graphic appeal and solid game play, as well. IBM ($49.95). Circle #9.

Virgin Mastertronic
18001 Cowan, Suite A
Irving, CA 92714

MEGA PACK: This is an attractive collection of ten arcade favorites placed together in one package. Games included are Bulldog, Jack the Nipper II, North Star, The Thing Bounces Back, Monty On The Run, Rebounder, Trailblazer, Krackout, Cosmic Causeway, and Future Knight. Pull into port with your joystick, because no quarters are required to stay in this arcade. C-64/128. Circle Reader Service #10.

SHARK ATTACK: This worthy addition to one's computer golfing game library is named after Australia's Greg Norman (known as "The Great White Shark"). Some of its interesting features include an on screen ability to design a golf swing (were it only this easy to fix our *real* golf swings!), adjusting the club face, and a 360 degree rotating 3-D perspective available for each lie. Nothing to get teed off about, one won't have a stroke when puttering about with "Shark Attack", a simulator with teeth. IBM, Amiga ($39.99). Circle Reader Service #11.



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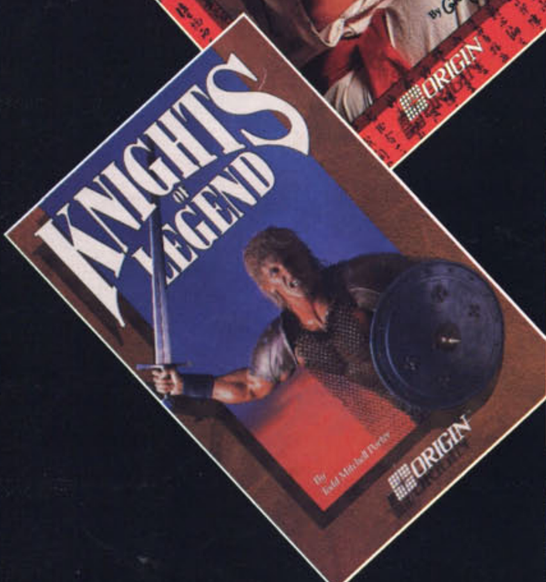




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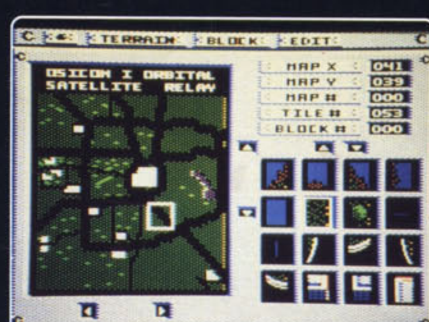


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